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Helen Channing Pollock



The Little Gray

BY

CHANNING POLLOCK



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WITH 28-30

18th St.

THE LITTLE GRAY LADY

A PLAY WITHOUT A HERO

*To dear
Gertie
who was mid-wife at
the birth of this play,
from her affectionate
nephew,*

BY
CHANNING POLLOCK

Channing

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PREFACE

To one person, at least, the perusal of the following pages has been a pleasant excursion along The Road to Yesterday.

"The Little Gray Lady" was my first original play. (That is, it was my first original play, if you will be kind enough to except a crude melodrama produced in my adolescence and Proctor's Fifty-eighth Street Theater.) It was begun in my twenty-second year, and with nothing in my mind but the conviction that I *should* write a play. My regular occupation was securing publicity for William A. Brady, who had just presented Wilton Lackaye in my dramatization of Frank Norris' novel, "The Pit." That fortunate debut, I argued, would avail me nothing, unless it was followed, reasonably soon, by another opus.

So, with my mind made up, and a promising period of summer idleness ahead, I sat me down to write a play. I hadn't the faintest idea what the play was to be about, or where located. In fact, as aforesaid, I hadn't anything but a conviction, and a title—"The Little Gray Lady." My only method of breaking down a wall is to beat my head against it. For more than a month I sat behind a locked door, in my apartment on Seventh Avenue, from nine in the morning until six at night, and tried to think out a story. The books and papers about me proved a temptation, so they were taken out, and, on the theory that forbade decorations in the Wagnerian theater at Bayreuth, the room was stripped of all furniture but a chair, a table, and a typewriter. At the end of five or six weeks, I had nerves, but no narrative.

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An old friend, a physician, told me the important truth that the best way to find an idea is not to look for it. Dejected and discouraged, I deserted the bare work-shop, took a train to Baltimore, disembarked there, and started to walk to Washington. On the way came something of a theme. The cause of its coming was rather personal, but perhaps you will forgive that phase of the history. I was engaged to be married to a lady who considered herself plain. She wasn't, and isn't, as anyone who knows my wife will tell you, but that is *too* personal, and much beside the point. The point is that she thought herself plain, and that I was forever telling her what Mrs. Graham tells Mrs. Jordan—that "a girl can push a man down hill pretty fast, but it takes a woman to help him up."

Here, then, was a thesis with the advantage of fitting a title I was resolved not to give up. The rest came in Washington, where I was born, had gone to school, had written dramatic criticism for *The Post* and *The Times*, and, most helpful of all, had lived in boarding houses and had friends who clerked for the Government. It would be like calling attention to Mont Blanc to note the wisdom of writing only of the things you know well. O. Henry's prime genius lay in confining himself to the romance of "Bagdad on the Subway," where he was familiar with every twist and turn of street and human nature, rather than seeking it in Asiatic Turkey. Washington's boarding houses, and what they had produced, and indicated, in their inhabitants was a forgotten mental reservoir into which water had flowed during the most impressionable period of my life. Once the dam was down, came the deluge.

Within twenty-four hours, I had my play—a rushing river, to keep the metaphor, into which flowed the futile dreaming of Captain Jordan, the

prying energy of Mrs. Jordan, the vulgar self-seeking of Ruth Jordan, the eddying of Perry Carlyle, caught in a back-water, and the infinite maternity of Anna Gray. I knew all these people—dozens of them—hundreds. Each was a type; one of a group that had sat about me summer evenings on the front steps, and gone “car-riding” for economical diversion. They themselves provided the story. It remained only for me to refresh memory photographs, confirm detail, and question friends in the Secret Service as to the possibility of occurrences connected with the manufactured bill. The bill itself was made small purposely. “The Little Gray Lady” was to be a comedy of small people, of their small joys and sorrows and hopes and fears and doings.

Back in my bare room, the piece was finished within a fortnight. I had not then acquired the knowledge of good work that leads to constant and destructive comparison, nor developed the faculty of criticism that tears down more than it can build. I was not forever asking myself if this speech could be bettered, or that situation advantageously remodeled. I wrote because I did not know *how* to write; as the centipede, in the verse, ran until someone asked how he managed his legs. But, alas, neither did I know how to sell, and here was merchandise that required considerable persuasive ability. Anybody can dispose of a play like every other play. The fact that it *is* like something that made a hit assures the average manager that it, too, will make a hit. But the man who produces anything different for the American Theater, anything fresh and original and without precedent, goes into the market-place accompanied by the Shadow of Bankruptcy.

So far as any actress had been in my mind, “The Little Gray Lady” was written for Phoebe

Davies, then in her third or fourth season of "Way Down East." Miss Davies wanted a new vehicle, but her husband and manager, Joseph Grismer, associated with my employer, Mr. Brady, was sure of "Way Down East." Charles Frohman, to whom the piece was offered for Annie Russell, declined it, only to tell me later, when he had seen the play and sent for me, that he had never received the manuscript, and would have considered it ideal for Miss Russell. A list of producers who declined "The Little Gray Lady" would fill my allotted space, as a list of their reasons would embrace every outstanding feature that afterward figured in its success. Elisabeth Marbury, my agent, finally grew weary—as, indeed, after three years, she had reason to be—and suggested that we retire my unlucky heroine to some nice, comfortable desk drawer.

Throughout, her imitation had the unflagging and unflinching faith of the original Little Gray Lady. I mention this impersonally as may be, and in the same spirit that impells me to mention a new champion, my second agent, Alice Kauser. Miss Kauser believed in the play, kept her belief, inspired with her enthusiasm, and, I think, invested some of the necessary capital, when, in 1905, four years after it was written, she finally found a producer in Maurice Campbell. And this intrepid adventurer, though limited as to means and influence, and without a theater, brought to the piece skilful and imaginative direction that added immeasurably to whatever value it may have possessed.

"The Little Gray Lady" was acted on the road in the Autumn of 1905, and came to the Garrick Theater, in New York, January 25th, 1906. It was, perhaps, the first play of its genre—of everyday happenings to commonplace people, who were not the rustics of James A. Herne, nor the crowded

metropolitans of Edward Harrigan, but more closely paralleled later in Rachel Crothers' charming "The Three of Us." The newspaper verdict on the performance was practically unanimous. The things I had liked, and feared—the grayness and everydayness of story and characters; the unimportance, except to them, of what came near being their tragedy—were taken as they had been intended, and criticism universally was of the sort authors and actors believe in—which is to say, favorable. That the piece made a somewhat deeper impression than do many offerings of its sort has been gratifyingly indicated this year, when I have seen two pleasant mentions of it in books of comment, one of them Walter Prichard Eaton's "The American Stage To-day." It gave me what came to be the close friendship of a great and generous man, Clyde Fitch, who, after its first performance, wrote to the apprentice in his shop, "Your 'Little Gray Lady' is a very big little lady, I think."

Anna Gray and her associates did not make much money in New York. For one reason, Mr. Campbell, as aforesaid, did not have a theater, and, because the owner of the house wanted to bring in a production of his own, we were obliged to leave the Garrick at the end of our biggest week. The Majestic, to which we moved, was pretty large, and pretty far up-town. Another reason I see now in reading the comedy after sixteen years. "A Play Without a Hero" may be an interesting experiment, but it is not likely to be popular. Perriton Carlyle was made what he is because his type is common in Washington, and exemplifies conditions in departmental life in Washington. Moreover, because that was the kind of man to call forth what was best in Anna Gray, and, finally, because, at twenty-two, I had more tolerance and sympathy for weaklings than now. Edgar Selwyn, since become a

playwright himself, originally acted Perry, and told me then that making a hero of the man who was to marry my heroine would double the success of the play. I know now that he was right. I know, too, that the general view of behavior such as Perry's is the correct view—that this behavior is symptomatic, and more likely to indicate true nature than do the bits of square conduct, at the end, which, in those days, I advanced in proof of redemption.

In spite of Carlyle, however, there has been long life in "The Little Gray Lady." The Western company, headed by Pauline Frederick, did very well, and, after twelve years, the piece continues so great a favorite "in stock" that hardly a week elapses that it is not done somewhere. Personally, and quite frankly, I am still in love with "The Little Gray Lady", because of the lady who brought her into being, and because, as a playwright, she brought me into being. I have gained literary skill and dramatic craftsmanship since her birth, but I should be happy to believe that I had lost none of the warm human touch, of the reportorial faculty, that shows in these pages. To me Anna Gray has been what she proved to Perry—"The Little Gold Lady."

CHANNING POLLOCK.

The Parsonage,
Shoreham, L. I.,
April 30th, 1918.

THE LITTLE GRAY LADY

THE ORIGINAL CASTS.

(*Eastern Company—Garrick and Majestic Theaters, New York, beginning January 25th, 1906.*)

PERRITON CARLYLE.....	<i>John W. Albaugh, Jr.</i>
SAMUEL MEADE.....	<i>William Humphrey</i>
CAPTAIN HENRY JORDAN.....	<i>Charles A. Gay</i>
RICHARD GRAHAM.....	<i>Robert Ober</i>
MR. UPTON.....	<i>Cyril Vezina</i>
BOB, <i>an urchin</i>	<i>Harry Wagner</i>
ANNA GRAY.....	<i>Julia Dean</i>
RUTH JORDAN.....	<i>Dorothy Donnelly</i>
MRS. JORDAN.....	<i>Eva Vincent</i>
MRS. GRAHAM, <i>nee Garruth</i>	<i>Justina Wayne</i>
MISS WADLEIGH.....	<i>Rachel Burr</i>

(*Western Company—Studebaker Theater, Chicago, beginning March 12th, 1906.*)

PERRITON CARLYLE.....	<i>Stephen Gratten</i>
SAMUEL MEADE.....	<i>Edward Elsner</i>
CAPTAIN HENRY JORDAN.....	<i>Frank Opperman</i>
RICHARD GRAHAM.....	<i>Charles D. Pitt</i>
MR. UPTON.....	<i>A. Latschka</i>
BOB, <i>an urchin</i>	<i>Harold De Becker</i>
ANNA GRAY.....	<i>Pauline Frederick</i>
RUTH JORDAN.....	<i>Ola Humphry</i>
MRS. JORDAN.....	<i>Eleanor Sheldon</i>
MRS. GRAHAM, <i>nee Carruth</i>	<i>Mary Moran</i>
MISS WADLEIGH.....	<i>Helen Leslie</i>

“ Frequent tears have run
The colors from my life, and left so dead
And gray a stuff, it were not fitly done
To give the same as pillow to thy head.”

MRS. BROWNING.

“ A man made weak by loving and then strong by
being loved.”

ARTHUR SYMONS.

THE LITTLE GRAY LADY

THE PERSONS

PERRITON CARLYLE
SAMUEL MEADE
CAPTAIN HENRY JORDAN
RICHARD GRAHAM
MR. UPTON
BOB *An urchin*
ANNA GRAY
RUTH JORDAN
MRS. JORDAN
MRS. GRAHAM *Nee Carruth*
MISS WADLEIGH

Certain officials at the Treasury Department.

THE PLACES

ACT I. The "back yard" at Mrs. Jordan's.
ACT II. Miss Gray's room—"the second story front"—at Mrs. Jordan's.
ACT III. Part of the Redemption Agency at the Treasury Department.
ACT IV. The "back yard" again.

The action of the entire play occurs at Washington, D. C., on an afternoon in June, and on the night, the afternoon and the morning of three successive days in October.

THE LITTLE GRAY LADY

ACT I

SCENE: *The "back yard" at MRS. JORDAN'S. Drop shows the rear of the house, a red brick structure to which has been appended a wooden porch. This porch is reached by two steps. Platforms behind the drop enable people to stand back of the second story windows of the dwelling. The curtains at these windows are drawn down. Sundry articles visible through the lower windows identify the room as a kitchen. Pans of various kinds are suspended from the posts of the porch, while tubs, empty bottles and a clothes horse litter up the corners. A fence, five feet high and newly white-washed, built of boards nailed vertically, runs from the drop to L. I E., while another performs a similar feat between the drop and R. I E. These fences separate this "back yard" from those of the neighbors, which are indicated by adjoining houses on the cloth and by various details. At L. C. in the drop is the entrance to a narrow alley, leading to the street. There is one tree in the enclosure, between which and the fence R. is hung a new hammock. At C. a bench. The yard is fairly clean, being used generally as a lounging place. It is 6:30 o'clock, an evening in June, and, as the act*

THE LITTLE GRAY LADY

progresses, the bronze of sunset dissolves first into the gold of twilight and finally into the silver of moonlit night.

DISCOVERED: *A pair of hands is seen above the fence at R. removing clothes from a line. CAPTAIN JORDAN, a ruddy-cheeked, white-mustached man between fifty-five and sixty, is discovered, sitting on the edge of the porch, engaged in freezing ice cream. BOB, a barefooted, not-overly-clean urchin of fourteen, is perched on the fence L. MRS. JORDAN's lodgers are at table in the dining-room beyond the kitchen, and, whenever the door between these two places is opened, the clatter of knives and forks and the noise of conversation are heard.*

Curtain rises during silence after orchestra has played curtain music. A woman in the neighboring house is then heard practicing the vocal scale.

BOB. Is it most froze?

JORDAN. If it ain't, somebody else has got to tackle it. I don't see why I should do *all* the work in the house.

BOB. What'll you give me to turn——

JORDAN. Ssh. Here's Mrs. Jordan.

(Enter MRS. JORDAN from house. She is a tall, spare woman of forty-five. Upon her appearance the vocal scale is stopped. She remains on the porch.)

MRS. JORDAN. *(Taking a comprehensive view of the situation)* They've got to their salad, Henry. You'd better hurry. *(She exits)*

JORDAN. How can I hurry the stuff? I'm not a steam engine.

BOB. Give me a plate if I turn the crank a while?

JORDAN. (*Testily*) No! (*Mutters*) Work! Work! Work! Nothing but work from morning 'til night!

BOB. Aw, stingy! (*Pulls a much-mussed envelope, brilliant red in color, from his hat. A battered boiler-cover is thrown over the fence R. into the "yard"*) Look what the drug-store feller give me.

JORDAN. (*Glancing indifferently at the boiler cover*) What? (*Looks at BOB*) That red envelope?

BOB. Yep.

JORDAN. What's it good for?

BOB. Oh, I don't know! I'll write a letter some day—maybe.

JORDAN. (*Takes the top off the freezer and examines the contents. Disgustedly replaces it*) Come on, Bob. (*Abandons freezer*) I'll see that you get a dish of ice cream.

BOB. (*Returns the envelope to his hat and jumps down with alacrity*) Cross your heart?

JORDAN. Cross my heart. (*BOB goes to freezer and turns the crank wildly. JORDAN sits in hammock, mops his face, and takes from pocket a cigar which he licks lovingly*) By jingo, it's hot! (*Lights cigar*) Keep that up and it won't be long.

BOB. I can't keep it up long.

JORDAN. What! A big, strong boy like you! (*The door within is opened and closed. JORDAN starts up, but is at ease again upon seeing who is coming. Enter MRS. GRAHAM, a pretty woman of twenty-five, neatly dressed*) Oh, I thought you were my wife!

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Coming down steps*) You didn't look overly well pleased.

JORDAN. Huh. You didn't wait for dessert. Wasn't Mr. Carlyle attentive enough?

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Annoyed*) Captain! (*To*

BOB) You may have my share—all the ice cream you want.

BOB. There *ain't* that much.

JORDAN. This house is getting to be a regular matrimonial agency. Virginia's bound she'll make a match between Ruth and Mr. Graham. They'd be a nice couple, don't you think, Miss Carruth?

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Blunting the edge of her remark with a laugh*) I don't think about what doesn't concern me. If you didn't you might have more time for what does.

JORDAN. Meaning work, huh? (*Gets out of hammock and stretches himself*) Wait 'til I get enough capital to open up the Black Diamond—(*Noise from house again. He hastily pretends to examine the freezer. Enter MRS. JORDAN with a tray of empty dishes. She comes down from porch*) Why, it's done!

MRS. JORDAN. It ought to be! (*She puts down the tray and throws the boiler cover over fence R. Addresses MRS. GRAHAM, who is sitting in the hammock*) I wish you hadn't left the table, Miss Carruth. It's awful the way Mr. Carlyle forces his attentions on Ruth. (*Fills the dishes with ice cream*)

MRS. GRAHAM. I don't see what I have to do with it. Mr. Carlyle is Miss Gray's guest.

MRS. JORDAN. He don't consider himself so. He's come here so much he feels like one of the family. And the way he talks to Ruth! (*Goes up steps*) The poor child is dreadful embarrassed. (*To BOB*) Bob Ebbets, take your fingers out of that ice cream! (*Exits*)

BOB. (*Calling after her*) I'm going to have a plate. (*Rises, with freezer lid full of ice cream*) Guess I'd better have it some place else! (*Exits over fence L.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Starts as the boiler cover, sail-*

ing over the fence R., falls to the stage with a crash)
He's a great boy. (*Sits herself on the step*)

JORDAN. Carlyle thinks so. He's always buying things for him. I don't know how he affords it. He's got his mother somewhere out in Ohio, and his salary can't be over twelve hundred.

MRS. GRAHAM. He's in the Treasury, isn't he?

JORDAN. Yes. He and Miss Gray are in the same room with Ruth.

(*Enter MRS. JORDAN with tray unobserved. Stands on porch behind MRS. GRAHAM.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. It's an idle, aimless life, and I think it's having a bad effect on Mr. Carlyle. Miss Gray frets a good deal about him.

MRS. JORDAN. Miss Gray!

MRS. GRAHAM. Yes. (*Shifting her position on step*) Can you pass?

MRS. JORDAN. Thanks. (*Comes down, puts tray on porch, and throws boiler cover back over fence R.*)

JORDAN. Why, I thought Miss Gray was stuck on that fellow, Meade.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*With deep disgust*) You men! Mr. Carlyle ought to marry Anna Gray—for his own sake as well as for hers. He needs a girl like her to keep him straight.

MRS. JORDAN. Girl! Well, if she's a girl, Henry is!

MRS. GRAHAM. That's just it. A girl can push a man down hill pretty fast, but it takes a woman to help him up.

MRS. JORDAN. I don't want Ruth helpin' any man up hill. If you want to save him why don't you marry him yourself? (*Picking up tray and apparently finding it heavy*) Here, Henry; carry this.

JORDAN. (*Takes tray, mutters*) More work.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Contemptuously*) When you get your Self-Threading Needle patented or your Black Diamond Mines opened, or——

(*Enter RICHARD GRAHAM, a clean, alert young man of thirty-two, dressed in flannels. He stands hesitantly on the porch.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Rises. Addresses GRAHAM*) Come on out. You're just in time to prevent my being married to Mr. Carlyle.

GRAHAM. (*Comes down steps*) Who's going to marry you to Carlyle?

MRS. JORDAN. Miss Carruth said she thought *somebody* ought to reform him.

GRAHAM. Rubbish! Carlyle's all right!

MRS. JORDAN. I've said it once and I say it again! I ain't a-goin' to have him marryin' Ruth, if I know it. (*Enter CARLYLE. He is a good-looking fellow, twenty-six years of age, conventionally dressed, and carrying a napkin as an indication that he has not finished dinner. MRS. JORDAN, fearful that he may have overheard, looks at him swiftly and covers her confusion by scolding her husband*) Henry, come along! Nobody wants ice cream for breakfast! (*Exit MRS. JORDAN in house. JORDAN picks up tray and follows her. Boiler cover thrown on stage again*)

CARLYLE. I'm sent after you, Miss Carruth. You're wanted to settle a bet about the pension office.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Goes up steps as CARLYLE comes down*) What a nuisance. (*To GRAHAM*) Don't go away. I'll be back in a moment. (*Exit in house. CARLYLE starts to follow her*)

GRAHAM. Carlyle.

CARLYLE. (*Stops and turns around*) Yes?

GRAHAM. Got a second?

CARLYLE. Surely. (*Comes down*) What's up?

GRAHAM. We're pretty good friends, Carlyle. Do you like me well enough to let me mix in your personal affairs?

CARLYLE. Drive on.

GRAHAM. When you turned up a minute ago, Mrs. Jordan was expressing the fear that you might marry Ruth. (*CARLYLE starts with surprise*) Now—I—it's none of my business—but—I——

CARLYLE. I'm not going to marry Ruth, if that's what you're after. I've never thought of such a thing.

GRAHAM. Excuse me for mentioning it. I acted on impulse, and you have been chumming with the girl a good deal lately.

CARLYLE. Chumming's the word. I like Miss Jordan. I think she's a mighty nice little woman.

GRAHAM. So do I. But all nice little women aren't helpful wives.

CARLYLE. I know what you mean—and who you mean. Anna Gray comes first with me if—if——

(*Enter MRS. GRAHAM.*)

GRAHAM. If what?

CARLYLE. If she wants to. If she doesn't prefer Sam Meade.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Coming down*) So you've been hearing that nonsense. (*Crosses to R.*) Well, if this isn't the gossipiest old town.

CARLYLE. (*Musingly*) It is that! (*Waking from his reverie*) By George! My ice cream will be melting! See you later! (*Runs up steps*)

GRAHAM. You're not angry with me, old man?

CARLYLE. Angry? With you? Don't talk foolishness. (*Exits*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Indicating CARLYLE*) He's a nice fellow. Only I wish Mrs. Jordan wouldn't keep thrusting him at me.

GRAHAM. That woman is the most confirmed matchmaker I have ever met.

MRS. GRAHAM. Horrid old thing! She just wants me to fall in love with Mr. Carlyle so that you can marry that silly daughter of hers.

GRAHAM. Ruth's a very clever girl.

MRS. GRAHAM. She's pretty enough to make you think so. (*Starts angrily R. C.*) Good heavens, you men are so stupid. The foolishlest doll face in the world can twist you around her little finger.

GRAHAM. (*Following*) Why, you dear old goose! (*Catches her and embraces her*) You know I don't care a hang for anyone in the world but you. (*A light is turned up behind a 'second-story window'*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Looking over GRAHAM's arms at the illumination*) I suppose she's up there now—at her dresser—sharpening her claws like a cat!

GRAHAM. Now, you mustn't be spiteful!

MRS. GRAHAM. I don't care, Dick! I don't see the use of being married if we're the only people who know it.

GRAHAM. You can't keep your position, Kiddie, if you can't keep our secret.

MRS. GRAHAM. Such nonsense that a woman can't work in the departments after she gets a husband. If you want to know what I think, I think it's downright selfish of the government!

GRAHAM. Never mind, old girl! As soon as we've saved a thousand dollars more we'll pull up stakes, settle in Venezuela, and grow coffee.

MRS. GRAHAM. On our own plantation—just you and I?

GRAHAM. (*Taking her hand*) Just you and I—and the coffee.

MRS. GRAHAM. You darling! (*Both hugging*)

GRAHAM. Do you love me?

MRS. GRAHAM. With all my heart.

GRAHAM. My kiddie! (*They are about to kiss. At this critical moment, enter BOB, scrambling to the top of the fence*)

BOB. Hi! Break away!

GRAHAM. (*Both jump out of hammock. He crosses to R., indignantly*) Confound that boy!

MRS. GRAHAM. Bobbie, you're so—so unsympathetic. Were you never in love?

BOB. Me? Nit! Dames is too much trouble!

(*Enter JORDAN from house, fingering a coin and muttering.*)

JORDAN. Doggone Carlyle! Why did he have to ask for cake? (*Going toward passage up L.*)

GRAHAM. (*Crossing to MRS. GRAHAM to L., addressing JORDAN*) What's wrong? More work?

JORDAN. (*Stops*) Yes. Got to go 'round the corner for cake. Won't you come, too, Miss Car-ruth?

MRS. GRAHAM. Well, I hardly think so. (*Enter MRS. JORDAN and RUTH JORDAN, a typically fluffy, alluring, consciously-attractive, golden-haired young woman of twenty-four. She pauses in the doorway and lifts her arm in order that her mother may place a needed pin in her dress under it. GRAHAM turns toward them, and, as she observes this, MRS. GRAHAM's manner changes. Going toward fence L.*) Bob! (*BOB fearful that he may be asked to go to the shop, starts to lower himself on the other side of the fence*)

BOB. Yes'm!

MRS. GRAHAM. Got a pencil?

BOB. Yes'm. (*Removes his hat and obtains one from the band—handing it to her. While the group by the porch is conversing, she takes a piece of paper from the hat and writes on it*)

GRAHAM. Through dinner, Miss Jordan?

RUTH. (*Her manner distinctly suggesting coquetry*) Oh, Mr. Graham! I didn't see you! (*Coming down toward hammock*)

GRAHAM. I don't know how people can linger over dinner in hot weather. It's so delightful out here.

RUTH. It promises to be—now. (*Sits in hammock*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Here, Bobbie. (*Hands him note*) Give that to Mr. Graham. I'm ready, Captain.

(*Exeunt JORDAN and MRS. GRAHAM. BOB reads the note, takes the red envelope from his pocket, triumphantly seals the letter in it.*)

MRS. JORDAN. (*Throws boiler cover over fence R.*) When I was a girl we used to eat dinner in summer on the lawn in front of the family mansion. (*Fanning herself on house steps. BOB crosses behind her quietly and comes down R. of GRAHAM*)

RUTH. Mr. Carlyle and I dined at Cabin John's Bridge last Sunday. Mr. Carlyle insisted on our having champagne. Wasn't it foolish of him?

GRAHAM. (*Dryly*) Considering his responsibilities—extremely.

BOB. (*Goes to R. of GRAHAM, carrying the red envelope conspicuously and addresses him in a stage whisper*) Psch! Mr. Graham!

MRS. JORDAN. Ruth is so extravagant. It's the blood of the Peytons. My grandfather—(*Stops speaking—eyeing BOB*)

BOB. Psch! Mr. Graham! (*Tugs at GRAHAM's coat*)

(*GRAHAM looks at him. He gesticulates frantically with his thumb.*)

GRAHAM. (*To RUTH*) Excuse me. I infer that

this gentleman wants to speak with me. (*Rises and joins BOB*)

RUTH. Certainly.

BOB. (*Giving him red envelope*) From Miss Carruth. (*Winks gravely*) Tumble?

GRAHAM. (*Winking with equal gravity*) You bet! (*Takes note from envelope, glances at it, kisses it, shoves it back into envelope and the envelope into his pocket*) I'm the greatest little tumbler you ever saw (*Exit hastily L. BOB starts to go to fence L.*)

MRS. JORDAN. (*Severely*) Bobbie! (*BOB stops*) Where did you get that envelope?

BOB. From the drug-store. (*Running to and swinging up on the fence. Impudently*) They don't keep 'em at the butcher's any more. (*Laughs, and swinging over the fence, exits*)

MRS. JORDAN. The brat!! (*RUTH laughs*) You needn't laugh. If you hadn't disgusted Mr. Graham with your talk of champagne he wouldn't have gone. (*Rises*)

RUTH. (*Rises, crosses to L.*) Don't be silly. The note was from a woman.

MRS. JORDAN. All the more reason why you should have kept him. If you're not careful that Carruth girl will get him right under your nose.

RUTH. She's welcome to him. (*L. c.*)

MRS. JORDAN. Welcome to him! And him just left about half of South America! (*Rises. Her indignation can go no farther. She grips the ice cream freezer fiercely*) Ruth Jordan, help me carry this freezer in the house!

RUTH. And get my dress all rust? Not much.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Unable to lift the tub, sits on it*) I'll tell you, my lady, you'll need a rich man to pay your bills! Perry Carlyle can't do it!

RUTH. (*Coolly*) That's too bad. I'm thinking of marrying him.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Starting up*) Marry—Perry Carlyle! When did he ask you?

RUTH. He hasn't.

MRS. JORDAN. Then you can't *know*!

RUTH. (*Strolling to R.*) Oh, yes, I can! Only he doesn't—yet!

MRS. JORDAN. Well, you won't marry him so long's I can help it. (*Tugging at freezer*) Will you give me a hand with this freezer?

RUTH. No, I will not, so you might as well wait until papa comes back.

MRS. JORDAN. If you marry Carlyle, what is Miss Gray going to do?

(*Enter ANNA GRAY from house. She is a woman of twenty-eight, but looking older; plainly dressed, her hair parted plainly, altogether a plain person.*)

ANNA. (*Crossing to hammock—sits*) Miss Gray is going to climb into the hammock and keep cool.

MRS. JORDAN. Well, I hope you can—that's all! I can't! (*With the strength of anger, she lifts the freezer, and with it is about to exit into house. Boiler cover is thrown onto stage. She stops—puts down freezer—picks up cover—throws it over fence L. and exits*)

ANNA. Your mother doesn't seem to be in a very good humor. Anything wrong?

RUTH. She wanted me to help her carry that freezer.

ANNA. How did she come to mention my name?

RUTH. As a good example to me, as usual.

ANNA. I'm afraid I should be a very poor example for you, Ruth.

RUTH. I'm sure I don't see why.

ANNA. Oh, you're such a different kind of a girl.

(RUTH rocks her gently.)

RUTH. What do you mean by "different kind?"

ANNA. Why, when you come down to it, there are only two kinds of women. Those to whom men make love—and the others.

RUTH. And you?

ANNA. I'm afraid I'm one of the others.

RUTH. You *believe* in love, don't you?

ANNA. Yes. Queer, isn't it? But I do. I believe that love, especially the love of women, is a wonderful influence.

RUTH. That is, the love of women who love.

ANNA. The love of women who love, kills them; the love of women who don't, kills others. They are equally an influence.

RUTH. (*Forces herself in hammock beside ANNA—shaking off her sobriety, and, laughingly* Well, I suppose I'm fearfully shallow and frivolous, but I think that love's a good deal of a sham. You make up your mind that you want a man and you hook him in. That's all.

ANNA. Unfortunately, that isn't all.

RUTH. Not quite, perhaps. You've got to have some bait on your hook.

ANNA. That doesn't sound complimentary.

RUTH. Yes, it is. (*Jumps out of the hammock*) You have *plenty* of bait, but you won't use it. Now what in the world's the sense of having curly hair if you're going to brush it straight, as you do?

ANNA. (*Putting her hands to her hair*) It seems quieter.

RUTH. Good gracious! You don't want to be quiet!

ANNA. (*Smiling*) I'm told that you do—when fishing.

RUTH. Oh, I forgot about that long ago. That's

another thing you ought to remember. Don't be too wise.

ANNA. Why not?

RUTH. You can't expect a man to like a woman who knows more than he does. Didn't I hear you talking to Mr. Meade last night about George Eliot?

ANNA. Perhaps you did.

RUTH. Well! And I'll bet anything that Mr. Meade doesn't know whether George Eliot was a woman or a play by Clyde Fitch.

ANNA. Then it's time he learned.

RUTH. Very true, but don't make him learn from you. For every little boy who *loves* his teacher, there are fifty who *don't*. Men are little boys grown up.

ANNA. Anything more?

RUTH. Lots. (*Surveying her*) Your shoes, your dress, everything. You look ten years older than you ought to look.

ANNA. How do you know how old I ought to look?

RUTH. No woman ought to look any older than she has to. (*Takes a towel from her*) What are you sewing? (*Inspects it*) Of all things—a towel. If you must sew in public, why not tidies?

ANNA. I'm short of towels in my room. (*Taking back the towel*) Go on.

RUTH. Let's see. (*Reflecting. Sits on bench*) You don't flatter enough. Make every man believe you consider him the climax of creation, but don't let him feel that there aren't a dozen others ready to take his place the moment he steps down and out.

ANNA. (*Rising from hammock, crossing to L.*) Ruth, you're too absurd. You don't mean half you say.

(Enter CARLYLE from house.)

CARLYLE. Hello! Everybody out here?

RUTH. (*In an alert tone*) Yes. Come on out. I'm keeping the hammock for you.

CARLYLE. (*Rather coolly*) That's awfully good of you. I guess I'll stand, though.

RUTH. Doesn't a place by me tempt you?

CARLYLE. Frightfully! And the one thing I can't resist is temptation.

ANNA. I know.

CARLYLE. (*Not unkindly*) Don't preach, Anna. (*Enter BOB, appearing as usual from over the fence*) Hello, Bob. How's the boat?

BOB. I got it here. (*Revealing a boat obviously fashioned from a cigar box*) You was going to show me how to make it go.

CARLYLE. (*Affectionately*) Was I? Let's have it. (*Goes to L. C. BOB climbs down, CARLYLE taking the vessel from him*)

RUTH. May I see it? I'm so interested in toys. (*Joins CARLYLE and BOB L. C.*)

CARLYLE. I used to turn these out by the dozen when I was a youngster. (*Shows the toy to her—she looks it over superficially*)

ANNA. Yes. I remember you made one for me, and I fell in the pond trying to swim it.

BOB. (*With deep disgust*) Aw, boats can't swim!

CARLYLE. (*To RUTH*) You stretch a rubber band from shaft to shaft, twist a paddle around in it, and let the paddle untwist in the water. (*To BOB*) Where's the lid? (*BOB gives CARLYLE the cover of the box. He takes out a knife with which to cut the wood into three pieces*)

(*Enter MRS. JORDAN from house, followed by SAMUEL MEADE, a man of forty, rather coarse*)

in appearance, wearing a heavy black or red moustache and a moderately loud suit of clothes.)

MRS. JORDAN. Here's Mr. Meade, Miss Gray. I told him he'd better come right back.

ANNA. (*Extending hand*) Of course. I'm glad to see you.

MEADE. (*Crossing and taking her hand*) And I'm glad to see you. (*Nodding to CARLYLE and RUTH*) How'dy, Carlyle? Evening, Miss Jordan.

(*They nod in reply and continue business with boat, CARLYLE getting on his knees in order to work the better.*)

MRS. JORDAN. I knew Mr. Meade wouldn't mind this bein' the back yard. When I was a girl in Virginia we used to have grape arbors at the back of the house, and my grandfather——

MEADE. (*Paying no attention to her. Addresses ANNA*) I got you this book. You recollect you mentioned it? (*Gives her book*)

(*MRS. JORDAN angry at being interrupted exits into house.*)

ANNA. (*Looking at the cover*) Maxine Elliott; An Appreciation.

MEADE. I couldn't get the one you said—George Eliot. I thought this must be his sister.

ANNA. I'm greatly obliged to you. (*Going to hammock, sits*)

SAM. You look tired. What's up? Heat been too much for you?

ANNA. No. I have worked harder than usual to-day.

SAM. I should think it would make you tired;

just counting bills all the time. (*Lowers his voice*) Say that reminds me, I got a case in your division.

ANNA. What is it?

SAM. Thief.

ANNA. You don't say so. Was it much?

SAM. Only twenty dollars—that we know of. Your chief noticed a lot of condemned twenties torn in a queer way. So he has come to us.

ANNA. All the bills that go to the Redemption Agency are mutilated.

SAM. But these weren't scorched or chewed by rats, or anything like that. Pieces were torn out of them—one note torn at the end, one next to the end, one a little farther down, and so on.

ANNA. Why is that suspicious? I'm not in the Secret Service.

SAM. I couldn't see anything queer about it either, at first. It's a brand new trick and pretty hard to get onto.

CARLYLE. (*Rising—the boat still in his hands*) What's that?

MEADE. (*Changes his tone to one of carelessness*) Oh, just another way of making money without earning it.

RUTH. (*Going to MEADE*) Do you mean really making money?

MEADE. Yes. (*Illustrating with a scrap of paper*) One of the fellows counting bills tears little pieces off them like this, see?

RUTH and ANNA. Yes.

MEADE. He gets a bit from every part of the note. Then he goes home, pastes the bits together, and makes an extra bill!

CARLYLE. I should think it would take a very clever man.

MEADE. Naw! You've seen them puzzle pictures that children put together? This is the same thing. Any kid could do it.

BOB. (*To CARLYLE*) Come on! Let's finish the boat.

CARLYLE. (*Handing him the vessel*) After a while. I'm talking now. Bring it around to-morrow.

BOB. (*Demurring*) Oh! Come on!

CARLYLE. Go on now! (*Exit BOB, much hurt, over the fence. CARLYLE addresses MEADE*) What's done with a bill when it's made?

MEADE. The fellow spends it—just like any other bill.

RUTH. The tears must show.

MEADE. If people didn't take torn money there wouldn't be any Redemption Agency.

ANNA. What about the numbers? (*Takes bill from her purse*) Each note is numbered in two places. How does the thief get two numbers alike.

MEADE. He don't have to. One number can be in the gone part of his bill. So long's he has three-fifths of the note he's O. K.

RUTH. If it's so easy, I should think it would be done right along. (*Goes up to steps, sits*)

MEADE. People don't know about it. A fellow needn't be clever to do a trick like that, but he's got to be mighty clever to invent one.

CARLYLE. Do you think this fellow will be caught?

MEADE. The Lord knows!

RUTH. Mr. Meade! Who was talking to you about our division?

MEADE. Oh, a lady friend.

(*Enter JORDAN at L., carrying a sack. He is evidently surprised at seeing CARLYLE opposite him.*)

JORDAN. Hello! You didn't wait for your cakes, did you?

CARLYLE. Only about twenty minutes.

JORDAN. I've been waiting for Miss Carruth. She left me in the store and didn't come back. (*Sees MEADE*) Hello, Sam!

MEADE. (*Shaking hands*) Evening, Cap! Done anything about that self-threading needle of yours?

JORDAN. No, I've got a coal mine I'm going to open up. There's a million dollars in it for every one there was in the needle.

MEADE. You'd better keep the needle and practice getting a camel though the eye of it.

(*General laughter.*)

RUTH. Papa's been making fortunes ever since I can remember.

JORDAN. I'll strike it some day. (*Goes up steps*) Hadn't you all better come in? It's getting dark.

ANNA. (*Rising*) Yes; let's go in.

(*RUTH rises.*)

JORDAN. Come on, Sam. I want to get you interested in that mine. (*Exit JORDAN in house*)

MEADE. (*Addressing RUTH who is standing R. of steps*) You first.

RUTH. You're coming, aren't you, Mr. Carlyle?

CARLYLE. Yes. Right away.

RUTH. (*Making way for MEADE*) Apriz vous. Come along; she'll be in in a minute. (*Exeunt RUTH and MEADE in house*)

ANNA. (*Rises, starts to go, sees CARLYLE sitting lost in thought*) A penny for your thoughts.

CARLYLE. (*Lightly*) They're not worth a penny. (*More seriously*) I was thinking of that poor fellow in the Treasury. If he's caught he will go to the penitentiary. I don't think that a man who takes what isn't his, intending to return it later, is always a thief, do you?

ANNA. A great many thieves begin that way.

CARLYLE. It must be pretty tough for a young fellow to be shut up in prison.

ANNA. A young fellow should think of that and resist the impulse to steal.

CARLYLE. Somehow stealing from the government doesn't seem exactly like other stealing. Can't you imagine yourself——

ANNA. Yielding to that kind of temptation. No. (*Suspicion growing into horror. She looks into his face*) Perry! Perry! You don't mean that you—?

CARLYLE. (*Convincingly*) That I made the twenty dollar bill? Great God, no!

ANNA. Forgive me for asking that question, but you know you *have* been a little wild lately.

CARLYLE. Yes, I know. You were quite justified. I wonder about myself sometimes. I—I—seem to have been going to the devil ever since I left Canton.

ANNA. Then stop it.

CARLYLE. I'm going to.

ANNA. Find something to do—something that will keep you working and thinking every minute you're out of office. If you'd had something important to do yesterday afternoon you wouldn't have—I never saw you that way before, Perry.

CARLYLE. I don't think you'll ever see me that way again.

ANNA. (*Trying to joke*) You see, Perry, you've been slipping away from my influence. You need me to look after you.

CARLYLE. (*Seriously*) That's no joke, Anna. I don't know what fool things I might do if I hadn't you.

ANNA. (*Happy and embarrassed*) Nonsense!

CARLYLE. No other fellow ever had a friend like you. You deserve to be the happiest woman in the world.

(Enter MRS. GRAHAM from alley, hurriedly.)

MRS. GRAHAM. Oh, I hope I'm not interrupting.
(ANNA withdraws her hands) Has either of you
seen Mr. Graham?

ANNA. Not recently.

MRS. GRAHAM. (Crossing L.) Now, isn't that
too provoking? I asked him to meet me in Iowa
Circle and take me car riding.

(Enter MRS. JORDAN with book from house.)

CARLYLE. He left the table before dinner was
over.

MRS. JORDAN. He—who?

ANNA. Mr. Graham. (Exits into house)

MRS. JORDAN. He went out about half an hour
ago. Somebody brought him a message—a note in
a red envelope.

MRS. GRAHAM. (Surprised and angry) A note
in a red envelope! Are you sure it was in an
envelope?

MRS. JORDAN. Perfectly. I remember saying it
must be from a woman! He kissed it and hurried
off.

MRS. GRAHAM. He—he kissed a note in a red
envelope!

CARLYLE. (To MRS. JORDAN) Oh, come now!
You can't be certain it was from a woman!

MRS. JORDAN. I'm certain he wouldn't have
kissed a note from a man!

MRS. GRAHAM. (CARLYLE laughs) And all the
time I was walking around that circle waiting for
him.

MRS. JORDAN. I don't see why it was necessary to
meet Mr. Graham elsewhere.

MRS. GRAHAM. (On verge of tears) It doesn't
matter to me what you see, Mrs. Jordan. I've never
been treated so in my life.

CARLYLE. (*Soothingly to MRS. GRAHAM*) There! There! You'd better go in the house. Come along. (*Puts his arm about MRS. GRAHAM'S shoulders to lead her into house. Enter GRAHAM at L. passage*)

GRAHAM. (*Amazed at the embrace. With quick temper*) Here, Carlyle! (*CARLYLE turns to him*) What are you doing?

CARLYLE. What business is it of yours?

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Determined to pursue her advantage. To GRAHAM*) Yes. You don't seem to take me much into account. (*Addressing CARLYLE, as though continuing a conversation*) It is a beautiful pipe! Yes, it is! (*Takes pipe from his hands*)

GRAHAM. (*Bewildered*) I don't see what the pipe's got to do with it.

CARLYLE. (*Smiling to GRAHAM*) Miss Carruth was a little hysterical. And I asked her to come in the house. (*Exits in house*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Catching her breath convulsively*) It is a beautiful pipe. It's a beautiful pipe.

MRS. JORDAN. Well, I never! (*Exits in house*)

(*MRS. GRAHAM stands at C. GRAHAM at L. There is a moment's silence, broken by the tones of a flute, playing "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town". Both of the young people, however, are too serious for laughter. MRS. GRAHAM turns the pipe over in her hands. Its odor reaches her, and she holds it off in disgust.*)

GRAHAM. Well?

MRS. GRAHAM. Well! I've been walking around Iowa Circle half an hour.

GRAHAM. Half an hour! I sprinted around it until I felt like Maud S. doing a fast mile!

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Advances to him*) Don't tell stories, Dick Graham! I never saw you once!

GRAHAM. You're no worse off than I am! I never saw you!

MRS. GRAHAM. But *I* was at the appointed place.

GRAHAM. I was all over the appointed place.

MRS. GRAHAM. You were not! You got a note in a red envelope, and you kissed it, and—and——

GRAHAM. A note in a red envelope! (*Fishes it out of his pocket*) Of course I did! Your note!

(*Enter BOB. As usual he remains perched on the fence.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. I didn't put my note in an envelope! (*Suspiciously*) Red is the color of Ruth Jordan's stationery!

GRAHAM. (*Goes to her at c.*) Don't be foolish! (*Takes her paper from envelope*) Isn't that your note?

MRS. GRAHAM. Of course it is. When did you put it in the envelope?

GRAHAM. I didn't!

MRS. GRAHAM. You did!

GRAHAM. I didn't!

MRS. GRAHAM. You did!

GRAHAM. I didn't!

MRS. GRAHAM. You did!

GRAHAM. I didn't!

BOB. (*Innocently*) No, he didn't. I put it in.

MR. and MRS. GRAHAM. You!

(*Solo ends in meaningless screeches.*)

BOB. Sure! I thought your note looked nicer in an envelope, so I put it in the one the druggist gave me.

GRAHAM. Bob! You imp!

MRS. GRAHAM. (*To GRAHAM*) And you kissed my note! You dear boy! (*Throws her arms around his neck*)

GRAHAM. I must have been chasing you right around that damned circle!

MRS. GRAHAM. It isn't too late for our car ride yet, is it?

GRAHAM. I should say not! (*They go to the alley*)

MRS. GRAHAM. Here, Bob! Give this pipe to Mr. Carlyle! (*Goes up L.*)

GRAHAM. Here, Bob! Here's a half-dollar for you!

(*They lock arms and exeunt L. passage.*)

BOB. Gee whiz! (*Looks after them. He bites the coin to satisfy himself of its genuineness and then puts it in his hat. From the same source he extracts a match, with which he lights the pipe, puffing at it with apparent lack of pleasure*) That's fine!

(*The wild tootings of the flute melt into: "Because I Love You". The yard is lighted by the moon and by rays from the kitchen. Enter MEADE and ANNA from house. MEADE does not see BOB.*)

MEADE. Excuse me for trotting you off so quick. I wanted to talk to you.

ANNA. (*Slightly amused*) Weren't you talking to me?

MEADE. I wanted to talk to you alone—where nobody else could listen.

ANNA. (*Nodding at BOB, who still sits on the fence, his distaste for the pipe growing more evident every instant*) You've selected a bad place then. Bob has sharp ears.

MEADE. (*Turns*) Go away, Bob; that's a good fellow.

BOB. Can't. Got to hand this pipe to Mr. Carlyle.

MEADE. (*Goes to BOB*) I'll give it to him.

BOB. Won't do.

MEADE. And I'll give you a quarter. (*Takes silver from his pocket*)

BOB. Make it a half?

MEADE. I've only got a quarter in change.

BOB. Have you got a dollar?

MEADE. Yes.

BOB. I can change it. (*Takes half dollar out of hat*)

MEADE. (*Laughing, gives him the bill*) Here then.

BOB. Here's your half and here's the pipe. (*Gives him both articles*) Say, you're a real sport. (*Exit BOB over fence. ANNA and MEADE laugh*)

ANNA. You shouldn't have given him that money.

MEADE. It was blackmail, wasn't it? (*Comes down to her, folding bills to return to his pocket*) Miss Gray, will you marry me?

ANNA. (*Under the impression that he jests*) Is that a conundrum?

MEADE. I'm not kidding. It's a plain question and I'd like a plain answer.

ANNA. (*Realizing his seriousness*) I beg your pardon. You shall have it. No.

MEADE. I didn't *think* you would. (*Evidently staggered a bit, notwithstanding his assertion, he starts to return to the house*)

ANNA. Why did you ask me then?

MEADE. (*Stops and turns toward her*) Same as any other fellow—because I love you. I think you're the grandest girl I ever met. Of course, I'm a plain kind of a chap—

ANNA. That isn't why I said "no".

MEADE. Is isn't? You love someone else. By Jingo! I never thought of that! Who is he? (*Ad-*

vances toward her) Excuse me! I haven't any right to know! (*Goes up to house—stops, points towards same, conveying idea that it is CARLYLE, turns and speaks*) He's a nice fellow. Good-night.

ANNA. (*Follows him*) Let me see you to the door.

(*Enter CARLYLE and RUTH from house. They are in high spirits, and lift the tone of the scene at once.*)

RUTH. Hello! Been taking advantage of the moon?

MEADE. Sort of.

RUTH. If you're through with it we'd like to use it a while ourselves. (*Goes to hammock and sits*)

(*ANNA is surprised. Regarding PERRY, she realizes the import of RUTH's words, and, suppressing her emotions, goes up the steps.*)

MEADE. (*Giving CARLYLE his pipe*) I was to give you this.

CARLYLE. Thank you.

ANNA. (*To MEADE*) Come, Mr. Meade.

(*They exeunt in house.*)

RUTH. (*In hammock*) He's just proposed to her.

CARLYLE. Do you think so?

RUTH. Yes. And she refused him.

CARLYLE. How can you tell?

RUTH. I saw her face. You're keeping that girl from happiness.

CARLYLE. Keeping Anna from happiness? I? What do you mean?

RUTH. Can't you see that she's head over heels in love with Mr. Meade?

CARLYLE. (*Dazed for a moment. Then, with a short laugh, dismisses the matter*) Why, that's impossible! Anna and I——

RUTH. (*Quickly*) She told me herself there was no engagement between you.

CARLYLE. No. No engagement. Only I felt that the matter was—well, understood.

RUTH. You felt that she was waiting to say “yes” whenever you got ready to ask her. You weren't sure you wanted her yourself, but you were willing to prevent her taking the man *she* wants.

CARLYLE. I wouldn't do that for the world. I'll tell her to-night. I'll tell her she needn't consider herself bound to me.

RUTH. I would. (*There is a pause. RUTH swings herself. When she speaks it is in a lighter tone*) Don't look so serious.

CARLYLE. I feel serious.

RUTH. If it were me, I'd be too proud to worry about a girl who didn't care for me.

CARLYLE. I'm not worrying. I'm glad Anna is going to be happy. (*Goes to hammock*) It never rains but what it pours. I've lost about everything else in this town, and I was trying to win it back because of Anna. Now I've lost her, too. What's the use?

RUTH. Maybe the use is—somebody who cares for *you*.

CARLYLE. Who?

RUTH. Somebody. (*Leans against him*) As you just said: “What's the use?” You don't give a pin for her.

CARLYLE. Oh, yes—yes—I do.

RUTH. Just now—perhaps—because it's night, and my dress is pretty and my hair soft in the moonlight.

(Very softly and slowly, the strains of: "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms," played on the flute, drift into the air.)

CARLYLE. There's your answer. *(Speaks the lines of the song)*

Believe me if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be beloved, as this moment thou
art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

(The music ceases. RUTH reaches up and presses CARLYLE's hands. He kisses her) Oh, I shouldn't—

RUTH. Why not? There isn't anyone else, and—
and you meant that song for me, didn't you?

CARLYLE. *(Looking at house)* Yes.

RUTH. Isn't it dear that he should have played
that just then?

CARLYLE. *(Absently)* Very dear.

RUTH. We'll remember it all our lives.

MRS. JORDAN. *(From within)* Ruth!

RUTH. Oh, bother!

CARLYLE. Don't answer.

MRS. JORDAN. *(From within)* Ruth! Ruth!
I want you!

RUTH. *(Calling, going to center)* Yes! Coming!
(Rises. To CARLYLE) I'll have to go.
Listen—when you tell Miss Gray don't mention
her affair or ours.

CARLYLE. Of course not.

MRS. JORDAN. *(From within)* Ruth Jordan!

RUTH. *(Calling)* Mother, do have some

patience. (*To CARLYLE*) Perry, run to the corner and get me some roses. Bring them to my room.

CARLYLE. I will. (*Going up towards passage*
L.—*stops returns and kisses her*)

(*Exit CARLYLE hastily at L. RUTH goes to porch and is about to exit when the flutist repeats: "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms"—As she pauses an instant, enter ANNA from house.*)

RUTH. Back again, Anna, dear.

ANNA. Isn't that pretty?

RUTH. (*Affectedly*) It's the most glorious love song in the world.

ANNA. (*Surprised*) I thought you didn't believe in love.

RUTH. I believe in love songs. They help out so.
(*Crosses R. C.*)

ANNA. (*Puzzled*) Yes. Where's Perry?

RUTH. He went to the end of the alley.
(*Maliciously*) Where's Mr. Meade? Are congratulations in order? (*c.*)

ANNA. You know they're not!

RUTH. (*Goes up*) Oh, I didn't mean to be premature. (*Turns on steps*) Don't forget to bait your hook, Anna. (*Exit RUTH in house*)

(*ANNA looks after her. CARLYLE enters from alley, walking fast and carrying a bunch of roses. He does not attempt to hide these upon seeing ANNA. His conduct throughout the scene is that of a man who thinks he is doing the manly thing. ANNA'S suffering is plain to audience, but not to CARLYLE.*)

CARLYLE. Oh! Anna!

ANNA. Roses! Aren't you being just a little extravagant, Perry?

CARLYLE. Roses aren't very expensive in June, you know.

ANNA. Well, perhaps not. (*Starts to return to house*) I suppose you want to use the moonlight a while longer.

CARLYLE. No. I'm going in presently. I'd like to have a word with you.

ANNA. (*Happy at the prospect of hearing him say he loves her*) With me?

CARLYLE. Yes. I—I——

ANNA. (*Tenderly*) Is it so hard to say?

CARLYLE. (*More at ease. Smiles*) Rather. (*Business with roses*) Anna, you and I have known each other ever since we were children.

ANNA. Since you were a tiny, bare-legged boy, and I was a gawky little girl.

CARLYLE. It was always understood that some day we were to be married. I suppose I've been rather conceited and—and ungenerous about the matter. It never occurred to me that you might want to get out of the bargain.

ANNA. I? What are you talking about, Perry?

CARLYLE. Since we came to Washington I've noticed that we've been drifting apart. I don't blame you. You've been interested in steadier people and I—of course, I haven't panned out particularly well.

ANNA. I haven't asked to be let out of—of what you just called our bargain.

CARLYLE. That's just it. You haven't asked. You've been too fine and faithful. But I——

ANNA. (*Rises and speaks with a great effort*) You want your freedom?

CARLYLE. (*Rises*) No! No! I want to give you yours. Honestly—you don't care anything for me?

ANNA. (*Hurt to the quick*) As—as a friend——

CARLYLE. Certainly—as a friend. You're the best friend I ever had. But you—don't love me?

ANNA. No.

CARLYLE. And you don't feel that you—that we are bound by what has been between us?

ANNA. No.

CARLYLE. (*Worried at her tone*) And you're not annoyed at me for coming to you about the matter?

ANNA. No, Perry, no! For a long time I've thought about coming to *you*. It's a great deal better that we should understand. (*She crosses to c.*)

CARLYLE. Yes; isn't it? That's just what I thought. Now we can go on in the same old way and be good friends.

ANNA. Yes.

CARLYLE. Won't you shake hands?

ANNA. Yes. (*She gives him her hand, recoils and withdraws it*)

CARLYLE. I told you that you deserved to be the happiest woman in the world. I hope you will be.

ANNA. I hope you'll be happy, too, Perry.

CARLYLE. Remember! I don't hold you to anything. (*Going, drops a rose in front of the steps. He steps on the porch and turns to her again. Once more the room behind the curtains at the upper window is illuminated*) I want you to understand that I didn't mention this for my own sake. (*RUTH, at her piano, in the second story apartment, begins playing: "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms". There is a moment's silence on the part of ANNA and CARLYLE*) That's a beautiful song, isn't it? (*Exits in house*)

(ANNA stands perfectly still, staring ahead of

her, then sinks on bench, crying. A strong yellow light from the kitchen door illumines her.)

Curtain

(1)—ANNA *still sitting on bench crying.*

(2)—ANNA, *going up, discovers rose, kisses it, and exits in house.*

ACT II

SCENE: MISS GRAY'S room at MRS. JORDAN'S. *The conventional "second story front" in a boarding-house, commonplace from the figured paper that adorns the walls to the faded red carpet that covers the floor. Several engravings, of the order of "Daniel in the Den of Lions," and a large painting of a mill by a stream hang in prominent positions. Two or three chairs, upholstered with red or yellow plush, are scattered about the apartment. A table, bearing magazines, a sewing basket, an alarm clock, and various other sundries, is at L. C. Beside it is a Morris chair with a hassock at its feet. A particularly large flat couch, loaded with pillows, at R. C. At R. 1 E. and R. 3 E. are windows behind lace curtains, and between these are an upright piano, with a mirror hung over it, and a music rack. Down-stage at R. a writing desk. In the flat, at C., a door which when open, admits a partial view of the hall and the head of a flight of stairs. R. of this door a bookcase, well-filled, and L. of it a funereal mantelpiece of white marble. No fire is burning in the grate, and it is evident that none is intended to burn there. At L. 1 E. a door leading to a sort of closet. Whatever there is of cheerfulness or good taste about the apartment is given it by certain belongings of MISS GRAY'S—photographs, bric-a-brac, a table lamp, etc.*

TIME: It is 7:45 o'clock on an evening early in October.

DISCOVERED: ANNA is discovered seated at the piano playing some simple melody slowly and softly. The sound of animated discussion is heard in the hall, and, as the noise grows louder, she abandons the instrument to listen.

GRAHAM. (*Off R., from without*) You haven't any right to take things from my room!

MRS. JORDAN. (*Off R., from without*) They weren't addressed to you.

GRAHAM. I don't give a continental who they were addressed to. They were on my table; that's enough.

MRS. JORDAN. Anyone would say that I was doing you a kindness.

GRAHAM. I don't want kindness. I want to be let alone. Please remember that in future. I want to be let severely alone.

MRS. JORDAN. It's a pretty how-do-you-do——

GRAHAM. That's what I think! Good-night! (*Knocks at the door R.*)

ANNA. Come in. (*She rises from the piano stool. Enter GRAHAM. He is obviously angry and carries four or five letters*) You seem to be put out.

GRAHAM. I'm not put out, but I'm infernally likely to get out. What do you think? Mrs. Jordan quietly goes into my room and takes possession of a pile of letters lying on my table.

ANNA. Were they your letters?

GRAHAM. What has that to do with it? (*Comes down-stage*) No; they were Miss Carruth's letters.

ANNA. Perhaps Mrs. Jordan thought——

GRAHAM. I don't pay Mrs. Jordan to think, I pay her for board and lodging.

ANNA. Well, you know, it does look queer. I'm not inclined to mix in other people's affairs, but what *were* you doing with Miss Carruth's mail?

GRAHAM. Why, I was going to read it. This letter is from her mother.

ANNA. Has Miss Carruth asked you to read letters from her mother?

GRAHAM. No. Not exactly. The fact is—confound it, can you keep a secret?

ANNA. I'm keeping a good many.

GRAHAM. Well, then, I'm going to tell you! (*Lowers his voice*) Miss Carruth is my wife. (*ANNA bursts into laughter*) Is there anything funny about that?

ANNA. (*Still laughing*) Pardon me. Can you keep a secret?

GRAHAM. (*Mystified*) I guess so.

ANNA. Well then, I'm going to tell you. (*Lowers her voice in imitation of him*) I know she is!

GRAHAM. (*Greatly surprised*) Who told you?

ANNA. You!

GRAHAM. Never until this moment.

ANNA. Never in so many words. But when I see a wedding ring suspended on the inside of a woman's shirtwaist, I draw my own conclusions.

GRAHAM. Good Heavens! That's the evil of peek-a-boo waists! I wonder if Mrs. Jordan saw that ring.

ANNA. If she had, she wouldn't be making all this trouble.

GRAHAM. Trouble! That woman is driving me to an early grave.

ANNA. How? (*Sits R. of table*)

GRAHAM. By her persecutions. Yesterday she found a pair of Mrs. Graham's garters in my room. Of course, she didn't know whose garters they were, and she is convinced that I am a hopeless mixture of Lothario and Don Juan.

ANNA. Poor man. (*Laughing*)

GRAHAM. She must have told the Captain, too. Whenever he meets me he winks.

ANNA. (*Still laughing heartily*) Oh, dear!

GRAHAM. She's always discovering photographs of my wife with affectionate inscriptions on them, and I don't think I've kissed Edith once this month that that dragon hasn't materialized out of thin air in front of me.

ANNA. Why don't you confess the whole thing to her?

GRAHAM. Because it would be public property inside of twenty-four hours, and Edith would lose her position. (*Going down L.*)

ANNA. But Mrs. Jordan knows a married woman can't work in the departments.

GRAHAM. That wouldn't keep her quiet. No; we'll be going to South America next month, and we can stand it until then!

ANNA. You'll be a bigamist by that time. Mrs. Jordan will have you married to Ruth.

GRAHAM. Did you ever see anyone as persistent as she is about that? She's determined that Ruth *shan't* marry Carlyle. (*ANNA, who has been sewing at table, puts her work in the basket, rises, and walks silently to R.*) By George! She isn't any more anxious about that than I am!

ANNA. (*Turning to him*) Why you?

GRAHAM. Because I'm fond of Carlyle. Can't you see what that girl is doing with him?

ANNA. (*Agitated*) Yes! Yes!

GRAHAM. I don't believe she's a bad kind of a girl. She's just a fool, and sets a pace that Carlyle can't keep up. (*Going up to her; the table between them*) Why, their tickets for the theater to-night cost \$4. You can't do that sort of a thing on a hundred a month.

ANNA. Perry has his mother, too.

GRAHAM. (*Walking away again*) You're a friend of his. Why don't you speak to him?

ANNA. For that reason. He wouldn't understand. (*Faces GRAHAM with sudden resolution*) No; I'm willing that he should think what he pleases of me, but it would be no use.

GRAHAM. I hate to see a good manly chap being led by the nose. I've begged him to go to Venezuela for me, but he won't do it.

ANNA. If you had known him out West. (*Her tears choke her. She walks to the mantel, and then turns toward GRAHAM*) Oh, I wish to God that neither he nor I had ever seen Washington. (*Knock at door*)

GRAHAM. Sch! That must be Mrs. Jordan. (*Crosses to R.*)

ANNA. Come in.

(*Enter RUTH. She is neatly dressed in a traveling suit, and looks most unprepared for the theater.*)

RUTH. (*Nods to GRAHAM—addresses ANNA*) Good-evening, dear. Have you an alcohol lamp you could lend me?

ANNA. (*Coldly*) There's one in the closet. (*Goes to door at L., GRAHAM crossing her to R.*) Are you going to wear that dress to the theater?

RUTH. (*Slightly confused*) Yes, my best gown is at the cleaner's.

GRAHAM. (*Looking at his watch*) You ought to be leaving. It's getting late.

RUTH. (*Hitching at her skirt to pull up her stocking*) We can drive to the National in five minutes.

GRAHAM. (*Sotto voice. Raising his eyebrows*) Drive!!

RUTH. (*Repeats business with skirt. Addresses*

ANNA) I'm afraid you'll have to let me go with you a moiment. (*Whispers*) My garter's broken.

ANNA. (*Ungraciously*) All right. (*They go to door L. ANNA addresses GRAHAM*) Excuse me. (*Exeunt ANNA and RUTH. Knock at the door c. ANNA puts her head out of the other door*) Will you see who that is, please? (*She closes the door L. GRAHAM goes up-stage and opens door c.*)

GRAHAM. Oh, Carlyle!

(*Enter CARLYLE. He is carefully dressed, but looks haggard and worn. He walks wearily to c., and drops into the Morris chair.*)

CARLYLE. Hello, Graham. What are you doing here?

GRAHAM. Calling. (*Indicating the door L.*) Both the girls are in there. What's the matter with you?

CARLYLE. I've got a bad headache.

GRAHAM. Been drinking again?

CARLYLE. A little.

GRAHAM. You want to quit that.

CARLYLE. Oh, don't *you* preach. If you had as much as on your mind as I have, you'd drink, too.

GRAHAM. Maybe. I don't claim to be better than anybody else. (*Sits R.*)

CARLYLE. The only difference between bad men and good men is a difference of opportunity.

GRAHAM. (*Coming down*) Granted. Now, why don't *you* go to Venezuela?

CARLYLE. Don't bring that up again.

GRAHAM. I need someone there until I arrive and I'll need someone after. I'll give you \$75 a month and keep.

CARLYLE. (*Drawing his hand across his head*) Old man, if you knew how my head aches——

GRAHAM. (*Eagerly*) There's a boat sailing day

after to-morrow from New York. You can get ready and leave here to-morrow night. Listen now! You're throwing your life away working for the Government. There's no future for you—for anybody. I wouldn't stay here another year for a million dollars. Come on! Buck up, old fellow, and clear out.

CARLYLE. (*Rising, pathetically*) You know I can't go and you know why.

GRAHAM. (*Angry*) Because of a woman.

CARLYLE. You're always roasting women.

GRAHAM. I'm always doing no such thing. I think women are the finest articles turned out of the Celestial workshop. I think a woman like Miss Gray would do you more good than the gold cure. But Ruth Jordan——

CARLYLE. (*Firmly*) Now, drop that.

GRAHAM. I won't drop it, Carlyle, and you know why I won't. I like you and I'm not going to see you drift into utter ruin without trying to stop you. (*Goes to him and puts his hand on his shoulder*) Old fellow, you don't realize how you've changed in the past four months—since the night you told me you didn't care anything about Miss Jordan.

CARLYLE. I didn't then.

GRAHAM. You don't now; you only think you do.

CARLYLE. (*Rises and crosses*) Does it strike you that you're pretty blunt?

GRAHAM. I'm about to be blunter. This girl's just fascinated you. In the beginning her hold on you wasn't worth that. (*Snaps his fingers*) Now you're with her all the time and she does about what she pleases with you.

CARLYLE. You're talking nonsense.

GRAHAM. Oh, you think she doesn't, but she does. I don't believe the girl means wrong, but she's taken away your pride and your strength and your sense of responsibility. You didn't drink a drop when

you came to Washington. You saved your money and took care of your mother——

CARLYLE. I still do.

GRAHAM. You were as different from what you are now as chalk is from cheese. You'd be yourself again if you had a decent chance, but you'll never have a chance while you and Ruth Jordan are in Washington. I'm offering you an opportunity. What do you say to it?

CARLYLE. I say that I won't let you or anyone else speak ill of a woman I know.

GRAHAM. (*Stands staring at him a moment. Then furiously*) You can go to the devil. (*Rushes up to the door c., opens it, then cools down, closes it, and faces CARLYLE*) But you'd better go to Venezuela.

CARLYLE. That's more like it. (*GRAHAM comes down*) Graham, I won't go to South America, but there's one service you can do me.

GRAHAM. (*Dubiously*) What is it?

CARLYLE. Lend me fifty dollars.

GRAHAM. (*Sucks in his lips*) M'm! When?

CARLYLE. To-night. I've got to have it to-night, or it won't do me the least good.

GRAHAM. (*Taking bills from his pocket*) I haven't ten dollars about me. What do you want with it?

CARLYLE. I can't tell you.

GRAHAM. Some foolishness?

CARLYLE. No. (*Goes to him*) Graham, it's damned serious. (*Takes wallet from his pocket*) I've got money here, but it isn't mine and I'd rather not spend it. Unless you can let me have \$50 I must.

GRAHAM. I haven't got \$50, Carlyle. (*Pocketing the bills and walking L.*) No; and I don't believe I'd give it to you if I had.

CARLYLE. (*Throwing his wallet on the desk and*

following GRAHAM) Why? Are you afraid you wouldn't get it back?

GRAHAM. A few minutes ago I told you to go to the devil.

CARLYLE. Well?

GRAHAM. Well! Why the devil can't you go without my help? (*Exit at c., slamming the door behind him*)

CARLYLE. (*Calls after him*) Graham! (*There is no reply. He suddenly becomes limp*)

(*Enter RUTH at L. with alcohol lamp in hand. She leaves the door open, advances a few steps, sees CARLYLE. Returns and closes it. Crosses to R.*)

RUTH. (*In a low tone*) Have you got our tickets to Baltimore?

CARLYLE. No, I haven't. Look here. *What's the use of sneaking away to be married as though we were committing a crime.*

RUTH. *What's the use.* Supposing you ask Mamma?

CARLYLE. Why not be married secretly downtown, then? I don't see why you insisted on Baltimore?

RUTH. Do you want to back out?

CARLYLE. (*Irresolutely*) No. I think we ought to postpone it, though.

RUTH. I'm in my traveling gown, my valise is packed, I've made all my arrangements to go from the theater to the depot. If we postpone the wedding now, we postpone it indefinitely. (*Enter ANNA at L. A bell rings off-stage*) Here's Anna.

ANNA. How do you do, Perry?

CARLYLE. I'm not well.

RUTH. (*Goes to door c. The sweetness of her tone in marked contrast with her sternness of an*

instant before) We shall be late, Perry. I've got to stop for my hat, you know.

CARLYLE. (*Addresses ANNA at her elbow*) Anna, I wonder if—(*Stops short*)

ANNA. If what?

CARLYLE. Nothing. I couldn't get it from you for that. Good-night. (*Goes up-stage and joins RUTH*)

RUTH. Good-night, Anna.

ANNA. Good-night, Miss Jordan.

(*Exeunt CARLYLE and RUTH. They leave the door open. ANNA sighs, and going to the table, picks up her sewing. Sits R. of table. Without having knocked enter MRS. JORDAN, at c. a large pasteboard box in her hands.*)

MRS. JORDAN. Miss Gray, what do you think?

ANNA. Oh, Mrs. Jordan, I didn't hear you knock.

MRS. JORDAN. I was that agitated I reckon I forgot to knock. Did you hear the front door-bell a minute ago?

ANNA. I don't remember. I suppose so.

MRS. JORDAN. Well, it was a boy from the Palais Royal with this box for Mr. Graham. I thought it was kind of funny Mr. Graham getting things at the Palais, but I didn't say nothin'.

(NOTE: *In Washington the first word in Palais Royal is given the French, and the second word the English pronunciation.*)

ANNA. Naturally.

MRS. JORDAN. *But* coming upstairs the cover fell off the box. Well, what do you suppose was in it?

ANNA. That name of the maker?

MRS. JORDAN. No. (*Placing the box on the piano*)

stool and holding aloft a lace night gown and a corset cover) These!

ANNA. (*Restraining her laughter*) I didn't know men wore lace night gowns.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Sniffs*) Men, indeed! I reckon you didn't know men wore *these* either. (*Holding up a pair of embroidered opera stockings*) Now I want to know what Mr. Graham intends to do with them.

ANNA. Christmas is coming. He may want to hang them up for Santa Claus.

MRS. JORDAN. Santa Claus your Grandmother! He's going to give them to Miss Carruth. Positively indecent I call it. (*Fingers the stockings lovingly*) And Ruth almost out of stockings, too.

ANNA. (*Takes stockings from her work-basket*) Yes. So am I.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Her anger rising*) What would you advise me to do about it? (*A bell rings off-stage*)

ANNA. Since that probably is Mr. Graham at the bell, I should advise you to tie up the box as carefully as possible and take it to him at once.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Tying up the box*) But in *my* house!

ANNA. I suppose Miss Carruth needs stockings in your house as in any other. (*Enter JORDAN C., first knocking on door. He carries a tray with a card on it and comes down back of table, somewhat pompously*) Good-evening, Captain.

JORDAN. Good-evening, Miss Gray.

ANNA. (*Reading card*) Show him up, please.

MRS. JORDAN. Who is it?

ANNA. Mr. Meade.

MRS. JORDAN. Goodness, and I'm not dressed. (*ANNA turns quickly to mirror and touches her hair.* MRS. JORDAN redoubles her haste in closing box)

JORDAN. (*Leaning over balustrade outside*)
Come along, Sam.

MRS. JORDAN. Henry, you are in such a hurry.
(*Takes box under her arm. The stockings are hanging out of it*) I'll be in after a while, Miss Gray.
(*Exit at c.*)

JORDAN. (*Gravely bowing MEADE in*) This way.

(*Enter MEADE.*)

ANNA. (*To MEADE*) This is an unexpected treat.

MEADE. Thanks. (*To JORDAN shaking his hand*)
Hello, Cap. How are the mines?

JORDAN. (*Losing his dignity immediately and coming down*) Well, I'll tell you, Sam. I haven't been able to do much with them. The Coal Trust's got capital scared. I've got a bill before Congress now.

MEADE. Pension?

JORDAN. No. I never was a soldier.

MEADE. How'd you get your title?

JORDAN. Canal boat. (*Sits on piano stool*)
This is a bill to build a home for survivors of the Custer Massacre. It's worth a hundred thousand dollars to me—if it passes.

MEADE. I hope it passes. Good-bye.

JORDAN. Good-bye. (*Rises. To ANNA*) Good-night, Miss Gray.

ANNA. Good-night, Captain. (*Exit JORDAN at c.*) Poor old fellow.

MEADE. (*Places his hat on piano and looking about*) Got it pretty nice here, haven't you?
(*Points to door L.*) That another room?

ANNA. (*Sits L. of table*) A kind of large closet. I keep my wash-stand in there, but the room's not of much use. There's no window in it.

MEADE. (*Turning to window*) You get plenty of light from here.

ANNA. And air. Especially in winter.

MEADE. (*Looking at picture on piano*) Who's this?

ANNA. My brother Fred.

MEADE. Humph. (*Takes another picture*) This Carlyle?

ANNA. Yes.

MEADE. (*Reading from the back*) "To my little gray lady. Canton, September 3, 1895." Five years ago.

ANNA. Yes.

MEADE. (*Putting picture back*) Now he's engaged to Miss Jordan.

ANNA. Yes.

MEADE. That's what I call a dirty, sneaking trick.

ANNA. We won't talk about it if you please, Mr. Meade.

MEADE. Will you marry me now?

ANNA. No.

MEADE. Why?

ANNA. Because I don't love you.

MEADE. You'd better marry a man you don't love than a man who don't love you.

ANNA. I shan't marry anyone, Mr. Meade. Will you sit down?

MEADE. Thanks. (*Sits R. of table. There is a long silence. ANNA sews, MEADE catches sight of CARLYLE'S wallet, picks it up, looks it over carefully, and drops it on the desk again*)

ANNA. (*Smiling*) Haven't you any more to say?

MEADE. Lots.

ANNA. Say it.

MEADE. (*Troubled*) It's not easy to say. (*Resolutely*) Miss Gray, did you ever take any money that didn't belong to you?

ANNA. Yes. (*MEADE leans towards her*) Once

I took a quarter from my mother's purse to buy gumdrops with. I was whipped for it.

(MEADE *relaxes.*)

MEADE. (*Playing with CARLYLE's wallet*) I don't mean that. I mean did you ever take any money out of the Treasury Department?

ANNA. Mr. Meade!!

MEADE. You needn't get huffy. Lots of good people have.

ANNA. Why do you come to *me*?

MEADE. Because this hundred dollar bill was marked. The minute it's spent I've got the thief.

ANNA. And so?

MEADE. If you took it you'd better tear it up. Did you take it?

ANNA. Why, what a question.

MEADE. I want a square no.

ANNA. (*Looking him in the face*) No.

MEADE. That's enough. (*Rises relieved*)

ANNA. Mr. Meade, you asked me to marry you a moment ago, believing that I might be a thief?

MEADE. Why, what's that got to do with it? As I said, plenty of good people make mistakes. Anyway, I don't love you because you're honest. I love you because you're you.

ANNA. Oh.

MEADE. Now will you marry me?

ANNA. (*Smiling wistfully*) No, and I know just how fine a man I'm giving up, too.

MEADE. That don't do me much good.

ANNA. So it was a hundred dollar bill this time.

MEADE. One of the yellow boys.

ANNA. Made the same way the other was?

MEADE. Same way, out of pieces torn from mutilated bills.

ANNA. What made you suspect me?

MEADE. One of the packages inspected came from you. The bills in it weren't torn very much out of the ordinary. Nobody'd have noticed them if it hadn't been for the other bundles.

ANNA. Who counted the other bundles?

MEADE. Upton, Ruth Jordan and Carlyle.

ANNA. It looks ugly for all of us.

MEADE. It's going to be ugly for somebody. I've got something in my pocket here that'll pretty nearly settle the maker of that note when it gets back to the Treasury. (*Taps pocket*)

ANNA. In your pocket—now?

MEADE. Yes. Pinned in. Couldn't take any chances of losing it. (*Rising*) Of course mum's the word. I'd get into hot water if the chief found I'd talked. (*Takes his hat from piano where it has lain, and brushes it with his sleeve*)

ANNA. What's your hurry? It's early yet.

MEADE. (*Looking at his watch*) Nearly ten! (*Replaces watch*) Besides, I've said all I came to say. Good-night.

ANNA. (*Shakes hands with him*) Well, good-night, and thank you for your generous warning.

MEADE. Don't mention it. (*Stands, wrestling with what is evidently a new idea*)

ANNA. (*Smiling*) Yes?

MEADE. If you knew Carlyle was a crook would you still be in love with him.

ANNA. What was it *you* said? "I don't love you because you're honest. I love you because you're you."

MEADE. I guess he's straight all right. Good-night. (*Exit MEADE at c.*)

ANNA. (*Musingly, looking toward CARLYLE'S photo*) "I guess he's straight". (*Going down R.*) He hadn't any money yesterday I know. I wonder when that bill was made. (*Knock at door c.*) Well?

MRS. JORDAN. (*Without*) It's me—Mrs. Jordan.

ANNA. Come in.

(*Enter MRS. JORDAN. She is dressed in a kimono and has her front hair in papers.*)

MRS. JORDAN. (*Comes down, sits L. of table*) I heard Mr. Meade leave and I thought I'd drop around to tell you something.

ANNA. I was just going to bed myself.

MRS. JORDAN. You go and get in something comfortable while I talk.

ANNA. I think I will. (*Exit at L.; leaves the door open so that her voice may be heard*) Go on.

MRS. JORDAN. You remember that box? (*A parcel on the table catches her eye, she unwraps it*)

ANNA. Mr. Graham's?

MRS. JORDAN. Yes. (*Looking at the parcel, which, upon being unwrapped, has proved to be a glass jar*) Is this face cream, my dear?

ANNA. In the jar? Yes. A woman at the office insisted on my bringing it home.

MRS. JORDAN. Do you mind if I try it?

ANNA. (*The sound of her boot dropping on the floor is heard*) You may have it all. (*MRS. JORDAN unscrews lid*) I never use the stuff. I think it brings wrinkles.

MRS. JORDAN. Thanks, dear. (*During ensuing conversation she is applying the cream, her face shining more and more with each anointment*) Well, when I took up that box to Mr. Graham's room, (*Crosses, business*) he wasn't in. (*Crosses, business*) So I concluded to carry it to Miss Caruth. (*Pause. ANNA lets boot drop off scene*)

ANNA. Yes, I hear.

MRS. JORDAN. I knocked at her door, but there wasn't any answer. Then I opened it, and what do you reckon I saw?

ANNA. Miss Carruth?

MRS. JORDAN. And Mr. Graham.

ANNA. (*Laughs*) Kissing?

MRS. JORDAN. Worse than that. (*Explosively*) Shaving.

ANNA. Not both of them.

MRS. JORDAN. Of course, not both of them. Mr. Graham. (*Business*)

ANNA. Dear me. How dreadful.

MRS. JORDAN. *He* was in his shirt sleeves. "Mr. Graham," says I, "I won't see such goings on in my house".

ANNA. What did he say?

MRS. JORDAN. "Mrs. Jordan" says he, "If you'd knocked you wouldn't a' had to". I think I'll ask her to leave.

ANNA. Why her? You confess it was *Mister* Graham who was shaving.

MRS. JORDAN. In her room.

ANNA. Well, shaving isn't precisely immoral, you know. (*Pause*)

MRS. JORDAN. (*Rising to look at herself in the mirror*) I don't think I'll have him marry Ruth now. How long ought I to keep this on?

ANNA. About fifteen minutes.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Seating herself R. of table*) Though, goodness knows, I'd rather she'd marry anybody sooner than Perriton Carlyle.

ANNA. Why are you so down on Perry?

(*Enter ANNA. She looks exceedingly pretty in a soft negligee and slippers. She is carrying her cast-off clothing in a heap over her arm and drops it in rocking chair L. of table.*)

MRS. JORDAN. He's reckless and good-for-nothing. I wouldn't trust him with women either. He was making up to you when you came here; now

it's Ruth. Why, he smiled at me the other night.

ANNA. Impossible.

MRS. JORDAN. Yes, he did, and when I told the Captain he said if it happened again, he'd thrash Mr. Carlyle within an *inch of his life*.

(Knock at door c.)

ANNA. Who's there?

GRAHAM. *(Without)* Miss Carruth.

MRS. GRAHAM. *(Without)* And Dick. *(Sound of kiss is heard. Evidently addressing DICK)* Dick, dear, don't. You don't know where that old woman may be.

(MRS. JORDAN springs up.)

MRS. JORDAN. *(Sotto voice)* Old Woman!! Me!! *(Rises)*

ANNA. Just a minute. *(Covers the bundle of clothes with pillows from couch)* Now.

(Enter MR. and MRS. GRAHAM. They are just in from the street and dressed accordingly.)

MRS. GRAHAM. *(Starting with surprise at seeing MRS. JORDAN)* Oh, Gracious, I didn't know you were in here.

MRS. JORDAN. *(Sniffs)* No; I reckon not.

GRAHAM. What's wrong with your face.

MRS. JORDAN. My *face*?

ANNA. He means that Cream of Youth.

MRS. JORDAN. Oh, is that all?

MRS. GRAHAM. *(Excitedly)* Miss Gray, you can't guess what has happened.

ANNA. I shouldn't try.

MRS. GRAHAM. Well, you know when Dick—when Mr. Graham's uncle died he was supposed to be land poor.

GRAHAM. Mr. Carr, his lawyer, wrote that he'd left that plantation in Venezuela, but absolutely nothing else. Then I made up my mind suddenly that I'd *get* the money; that plantation would become an object in life.

MRS. GRAHAM. He woke me up in the middle of the night to tell me about it.

MRS. JORDAN. (*Shouting*) He what?

ANNA. He knocked on her door in the middle of the night to tell her about it.

MR. and MRS. GRAHAM. Yes; that's right. He knocked on her door, etc. (GRAHAM *mops face with handkerchief*)

MRS. JORDAN. Oh.

GRAHAM. The lawyer telegraphed me to-night that he was on his way to Richmond and wished I would meet him at the station.

MRS. GRAHAM. So we did.

GRAHAM. And he says he thinks he's going to realize four or five thousand dollars from some mining stock of Uncle Billy's.

ANNA. What luck.

GRAHAM. He'll know by Friday, and if he's not mistaken—

MRS. GRAHAM. Dick and I will take the next boat for Venezuela. What do you think of that?

MRS. JORDAN. (*Rising majestically*) I think it's disgraceful. I've never had such connivings in my house before, and I hope I never won't again. (*Goes to them*) The next boat for Venezuela. (*Eyplosively at door.*) Good-night. (*Exit* MRS. JORDAN)

GRAHAM. (*Laughing, as do they all*) We've cooked our goose.

MRS. GRAHAM. Never mind. When we hear from Mr. Carr, we'll tell her the truth and resign our positions. (*Going to door c.*) Isn't she the stupid old thing not to guess?

ANNA. I am sure I congratulate you both with all my heart.

GRAHAM. I wish you'd speak to Carlyle when you see him to-morrow at the office. I wanted him to sail the day after to-morrow on the San Blas, and he refused.

(A clock outside strikes ten.)

MRS. GRAHAM. Come on, Dick. It's ten o'clock.

ANNA. That's not late.

GRAHAM. Yes it is—in Washington. Good-night.

ANNA. Good-night and good luck.

MRS. GRAHAM. Good-night, Miss Gray.

(Exeunt MR. and MRS. GRAHAM. ANNA locks the door after them and turns down the gas jet. Then lowers the folding bed. She takes a couple of gaudy sofa pillows and puts them in white cases, adding them to the number on the bed. Then she tucks in the clothes at the bottom and sees that they are clamped tight. She goes to R. and arranges her attire for the morning, putting her shoes side by side at the foot of the chair, etc. Next she winds the alarm clock. She braids her hair, takes her watch and kerchief from the bureau, and, returning to the bed, places them beneath the pillow. Gets on her knees in front of the folding bed and looks under it. As she rises to her feet again there is a gentle rapping at the door. She stops and listens, a puzzled expression on her face. The rapping is repeated. She goes up-stage and opens the door a few inches.)

ANNA. *(In a loud whisper)* Perry.

CARLYLE. *(Without)* Let me in a minute.

ANNA. (*CARLYLE enters—pushing past her as she tries to restrain him. He has been drinking heavily, but is not quite drunk. ANNA closes the door after him, but does not lock it. Both come down*) You shouldn't come to my room at this hour. You might get me into all sorts of trouble.

CARLYLE. (*Puts his hat on table*) I'm going right away. Did I leave my wallet around here?

ANNA. No. (*Sees him in the light for the first time*) You've been drinking.

CARLYLE. No, I haven't. (*Crosses to R. insistently*) I want to know if you have seen that wallet. I've got to have it. There's a hundred dollar bill in it.

ANNA. (*Suddenly suspicious*) A hundred dollar bill?

CARLYLE. (*Picking up the wallet from the table*) Here it is. I thought I left it here. (*Starts to get his hat. ANNA intercepts him*)

ANNA. Perry, where did you get that hundred dollar bill?

CARLYLE. (*Puts wallet in his pocket*) Don't keep me now, Anna. I've got a carriage waiting for me downstairs.

ANNA. Where did you get that hundred dollar bill?

CARLYLE. My salary, of course. Tuesday was the fifteenth.

ANNA. And you drew fifty dollars, twenty of which went to your mother. (*Advances toward him*) Tell me the truth, Perry.

CARLYLE. What reason have you to believe that I am not telling the truth.

ANNA. I *know* you're not. I know that money couldn't have come from your salary, and I almost know where it did come from. (*Impressively*) You remembered what you heard Mr. Meade say about putting bills together.

CARLYLE. (*Exasperated*) Now, look here, Anna. You're going too far. Being a friend doesn't give you the right to——

ANNA. I don't want you to make a fool of yourself. Did you take that money out of the treasury?

CARLYLE. No, I didn't.

ANNA. Then where did you get it?

CARLYLE. I don't choose to tell you. Now will you let me go?

ANNA. Yes. (*He goes to table and is about to take his hat when her speech stops him*) Only you'd better not spend that bill. It's marked.

CARLYLE. (*Takes wallet from pocket*) Who told you that?

ANNA. Oh, so you *did* take it from the treasury.

CARLYLE. (*Examining both sides of the bill*) It's not marked.

ANNA. You don't suppose the Secret Service would mark a bill so that you could recognize it a block away. I tell you if you spend that money you're gone.

CARLYLE. (*Alarmed*) The Secret Service! (*Inspecting the note again*) Who told you it was marked?

ANNA. I can't give you his name.

CARLYLE. (*Loudly*) It was Meade. That's how he knew so much about the twenty. He's in the Secret Service.

ANNA. Sch! Mrs. Jordan will hear you.

CARLYLE. (*Puts wallet back in his pocket. Starts up-stage*) Well, I can't help it. I've got to have the money.

ANNA. You don't mean to say that you *are* going to spend it?

CARLYLE. (*Kindly*) Don't be silly, Anna. I'll put it back the first——

ANNA. This isn't a question of right and wrong alone. It's a question of being caught.

CARLYLE. Well, I've got to take the chance.

ANNA. You haven't any chance. If you need money so desperately why didn't you hold back your mother's allowance a few days and make it up to *her* on the first?

CARLYLE. I thought of that, but I couldn't do it. She needed money too. I can't let my mother suffer for my mistakes.

ANNA. But now—surely you can wait. Wait 'til to-morrow, Perry, and you'll think better of this thing. You're not yourself to-night. Wait 'til to-morrow and I'll get the money for you.

CARLYLE. (*Going down for his hat*) No. Can't you see I'm between two fires? If there's going to be any trouble I'm in for it anyway.

ANNA. (*Taking the hat and holding it away from him*) Nonsense. Wait a few hours and turn it over in your mind. You're not used to liquor, Perry, and it makes you do mad things. If it weren't for that you would never have taken that money.

CARLYLE. (*Growing angry*) Give me that hat. I've got to go, I tell you.

ANNA. You shan't go with my consent. (*Throws the hat in room at L. and tries to close the door on it. CARLYLE, without actually touching her, pulls the door open and rushes in after the hat*)

CARLYLE. Hold on! (*ANNA bangs the door and locks him in, leaning against it, in utter exhaustion. CARLYLE throws himself against the other side*) Here, let me out!

ANNA. Not until you give your word not to spend that money.

CARLYLE. I'll break the door.

ANNA. No, you won't.

CARLYLE. Why won't I?

ANNA. Because that disturbance would compromise me.

CARLYLE. Well, let me out.

ANNA. I will, if you'll only promise to keep the bill until to-morrow.

CARLYLE. (*Getting very angry*) I'll promise nothing. You've no right to detain me this way.

ANNA. I'm doing it for your sake.

CARLYLE. (*Furiously*) If you don't let me out I'll believe you're doing it for your own—because you are jealous of Ruth.

ANNA. Perry.

CARLYLE. I'll believe you want to queer me with her. You've always been jealous of her. You've always been in love with me.

ANNA. That's a lie. I never loved you. (*There is a loud knock at door c.*) Sch.

CARLYLE. I didn't go to say that Anna, I——

ANNA. Sch. (*There is another knock. ANNA speaks in a low frightened tone*) That's Mrs. Jordan.

CARLYLE. (*In the same tone*) Better let me out.

(*Another peremptory knock.*)

ANNA. No, keep quiet. (*To the person outside*) Yes, what is it?

RUTH. (*Without*) It's Ruth Jordan. Let me in.

ANNA. Come in. (*Enter RUTH wearing hat and coat. She is obviously angry*) What do you want?

RUTH. Where is Perry Carlyle?

ANNA. Perry? Why I thought he was at the theater with you.

RUTH. Five minutes ago he was in this room with you. He left me in the carriage while he came up here to look for his wallet. What have you done with him?

ANNA. What have I done with him? That's funny.

RUTH. Isn't Mr. Meade enough for you? Do you want every man in the house? What do you suppose Mamma will say when she hears of you hiding Mr. Carlyle in your room at this hour?

ANNA. I tell you he isn't here. He—he left some time ago.

RUTH. (*Looking about*) Perry! Perry!

ANNA. He isn't here.

RUTH. (*Going to closet door*) Don't tell lies, Anna. (*Tries door*) Why is this door locked? Open it.

ANNA. I won't.

RUTH. Why not?

ANNA. Because this is my room and I do what I please in it. Please go at once.

RUTH. And leave him to you? I guess not. Perry—(*Rattling door violently*) Perry, answer me.

ANNA. You'll wake everybody in the house.

RUTH. Then open the door. Perry! Perry!

ANNA. (*In desperation*) Open it yourself. The key's in the lock, if you weren't too excited to see it. (*She runs to door c., locks that and comes down holding the key*)

RUTH. (*Throwing open closet door*) Perry! (*He enters*) Now, perhaps you can explain this.

CARLYLE. I can explain it.

RUTH. I don't care for any explanation from you. The best thing you can do is to leave this room with me.

CARLYLE. (*Firmly*) You must listen first. I've been drinking—you know it. Miss Gray had to lock me up to keep me from disturbing everybody in the house.

RUTH. That's a likely story. Will you come? (*She tries door c. finds it locked, sees the key in ANNA'S hand—snatches it, and starts for door*)

ANNA. Ruth, you don't understand. Don't un-

lock that door. He's a ruined man if he passes it.

RUTH. Which means that he will lose you, I suppose.

ANNA. (*Her heart breaking*) No, no, no. I don't want him. I don't care for him. Oh, believe me, I don't. I love Sam Meade——

CARLYLE. I'll go.

RUTH. (*to ANNA*) Then don't interfere.

ANNA. (*All this simultaneously*) I resign Perry to you. I'll promise never, never to see him again. Only don't open that door until he's made me the promise I want from him. If you do, you send him to prison.

RUTH. A promise. A trick to steal my sweetheart. (*To PERRY*) Will you come?

CARLYLE. Yes. (*Goes to door*)

ANNA. I'll never see him again if you'll only wait. Open that door and I *will* take him from you. I'll know that you care nothing for his welfare and I'll do everything in God's world to keep him from you. Ruth! Ruth!

RUTH. (*Throws open door*) Go on, Perry. Quick, she'll waken Mamma.

ANNA. (*Throwing herself on CARLYLE*) Perry, for God's sake don't spend that money.

CARLYLE. I must. (*Exit*)

ANNA. You've sent him to his ruin—to the devil. Now it's a battle between us for the man I love and you don't. You shan't have him now. You shan't. I'll do anything in the world to prevent it.

RUTH. You will! You'll have to act quick then. The carriage is waiting to take us to the B. & O. station. We're going to Baltimore to be married. You've mixed in my affairs for the last time. In two hours I'll be the wife of Perry Carlyle. (*Exits*)

ANNA. (*Stunned for an instant. Recovers her-*

self. Runs to door c., flings it open and screams over the balustrade) Mrs. Jordan! Mrs. Jordan! Come quick! Ruth's run away with Perry Carlyle!

Quick curtain

(First call—General hubbub. Voices from below. MRS. JORDAN calling "Henry", etc.)

ACT III

SCENE: *A room in the Redemption Agency at the Treasury Department. The setting, which should be reproduced from a photograph, in its essentials is as follows: The flat represents a high, white-washed wall, in which there are three lofty windows. Through these windows are seen the familiar pillars of the building, and, beyond them, the corner of Fifteenth and F Streets. At L. 2 E., a grated door, which is locked and unlocked by one man whenever anybody is given admission or egress. At R. 1 E. a door leading to another room. The furniture consists principally of chairs and desks, five of these latter, in a straight line from right to left, belonging to MISS WADLEIGH, ANNA, CARLYLE, RUTH and UPTON. Pictures on the wall represent GEORGE WASHINGTON, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, etc. The day is that following the one which the preceding act transpired, and a large clock on the flat indicates that the hour is 11:57.*

AT RISE: *The Clerks are discovered at work. Each has at her side a bundle of bills, from which she counts a hundred. This bundle of one hundred is done up in a narrow strip of paper, which the clerk initials. She also makes an entry on an invoice sheet at her side. After a few minutes of pantomime a gong rings. One by one the clerks rise, go to a teller at a larger desk or behind a window, and turn over bundles to*

him. *This official signs for each bundle. This done, the gong rings again. There is immediate confusion, everyone making preparations for luncheon. MISS WADLEIGH, an excessively stout and unprepossessing woman of fifty-five, spreads a newspaper over her desk to serve as a table cover. MR. UPTON, extremely short, extremely thin, and extremely effeminate, gives her his fussy assistance. RUTH joins them quickly, and CARLYLE with more hesitation. ANNA starts to leave the room. CARLYLE goes to her.*

CARLYLE. (*Almost in a whisper*) Did you get the bill? You can tell me now.

ANNA. (*In the same tone*) Ssch! When I come back.

(CARLYLE strolls to the group at R.)

MISS WADLEIGH. (*To ANNA*) Won't you have some lunch with us, Miss Gray?

ANNA. Thank you. After a while, perhaps. I want to use the telephone first. (*Exits L.*)

MISS WADLEIGH. Miss Gray's been looking bad all day. I suppose she's worried about this money business.

UPTON. You can't blame her. I won't feel safe myself until the thief's found.

MISS WADLEIGH. Will you get the teapot, please? It's in the cloak room. (UPTON exits R., returning at once with pot and alcohol lamp) They say it's the second time this year.

CARLYLE. Who says?

MISS WADLEIGH. Mr. Moore. He tells me everything that happens in this division.

RUTH. Oh, Miss Wadleigh! Is the Chief in your toils, too?

MISS WADLEIGH. (*Taking up a piece of pie*) Now, Ruth, you mustn't talk that way. (UPTON *grabs playfully at the pie*. MISS WADLEIGH *coquettishly slaps his hand*)

UPTON. Is that mine?

MISS WADLEIGH. Naughty!

UPTON. Cruel! (*Seriously*) I never was so surprised in my life as when I got down this morning and found these desks locked.

CARLYLE. (*Rattling the top of the desk next him*) Are they all locked?

UPTON. Every one. They'll be searched after we go. (*To MISS WADLEIGH*) That tea's steeped enough.

MISS WADLEIGH. Hardly.

UPTON. Oh, pardon me. I can tell from the smell. (*MISS WADLEIGH pours a cup full*) See.

MISS WADLEIGH. (*Puts sugar in the cup*) There! Two lumps.

UPTON. Oh, scissors! I only take one! (*Fishes one lump out and sips the beverage delicately*)

(*Business of MISS WADLEIGH pouring tea for the others.*)

RUTH. They may have been through the desks already.

UPTON. I guess not. They will go through them, though. That's how the woman was caught last June. Just a few little scraps of bill in her desk.

CARLYLE. I shouldn't think they'd expect to get two fish with the same bait. The man—the woman who did this must have taken warning.

MISS WADLEIGH. (*Leaning forward confidentially*) I'll tell you something, but you mustn't repeat it to a soul. They're watching Miss Gray.

CARLYLE. Watching Anna! Nonsense!

RUTH. (*At the same moment*) How do you know?

MISS WADLEIGH. Some of the most suspicious looking bills were in her bundles.

CARLYLE. That doesn't mean anything.

MISS WADLEIGH. It means a good deal to a man as sharp as Mr. Meade!

RUTH. Meade! Huh! If the thing's in his hands he'll take care that Miss Gray doesn't get into trouble. He's in love with her!

MISS WADLEIGH. Why, Ruth Jordan! You know that Sam Meade's in love with me!

CARLYLE. Miss Gray won't need anybody's protection. She's innocent of any wrong-doing. She may not even have seen the notes you're talking about.

MISS WADLEIGH. Well, she *may* not.

CARLYLE. She *did* not. I'll stake my life on Anna Gray.

UPTON. She might as well have the game as the name. If they fasten the theft on her she'll go to prison, whoever the real thief is.

CARLYLE. (*Impulsively*) If they fasten the theft on her the real thief will confess! (*He observes that the others are looking on him in amazement*) Surely even a thief would be man enough for that!

(*Enter BOB, L., carrying a paper sack. The door-keeper admits him L.*)

RUTH. (*Leaving the party and going to join BOB at L.*) Hello, Bob! What are you after?

BOB. After Miss Gray. Got her lunch.

RUTH. Didn't she bring it?

BOB. Nope. Said she wouldn't have time to eat.

RUTH. (*Suspiciously*) Oh!

BOB. So your mother sent me with it. She said after what happened last night——

RUTH. (*Stuffs the remainder of her pie in his*

mouth, thus effectually choking his utterance. Looks around to see if he has been overheard. MISS WADLEIGH is just disappearing into the room R., followed by CARLYLE and UPTON, bearing the soiled dishes. The groups up-stage have sauntered off) Here's Miss Gray now.

(ANNA enters L. BOB goes to her and endeavors to speak, holding out her lunch.)

ANNA. Why, Bob! What's the matter with you?

BOB. Pie! (*Masticates hastily*) Here's your lunch.

ANNA. I don't want a bite. You may eat it.

BOB. I can?

ANNA. (*Goes to her desk—sits*) Well, I said "you may", but I guess you can, too.

BOB. Oh, thank you! That's the third lunch I've had to-day! (*Exits*)

RUTH. (*With intense feeling*) You left home this morning early and got to the office late. Where did you go from the house?

ANNA. Out.

RUTH. (*Sniffing*) I suppose you wouldn't care to say to what place?

ANNA. Your supposition is correct.

RUTH. I don't doubt you've been mixing in Perry's affairs again.

ANNA. If I have *that's* Perry's affair.

RUTH. Well, I just want to let you understand that it's no use. Papa made us miss the last train to Baltimore, but I'm more than seven and if I want to marry Perry Carlyle I'm going to.

ANNA. Perhaps you'd better tell him about that. It really doesn't interest me. (*She crosses to her desk, picks up a pair of gloves lying there, opens the desk and drops them inside*)

RUTH. I only wish it *didn't* interest—(*Stops short upon seeing what ANNA has done*) Isn't your desk locked?

ANNA. Certainly not. Why?

RUTH. Haven't you heard? Everyone else's is. They're to be searched after a while.

ANNA. Oh!

RUTH. I wonder why they didn't lock yours.

ANNA. They probably thought they had. Sometimes the key turns without locking the desk.

RUTH. Oh! I thought maybe Mr. Meade was showing his partiality for you!

ANNA. Of course, you'd think that.

RUTH. So would anybody else in the office. Everyone knows about you and Mr. Meade.

ANNA. Don't be silly, Ruth. (*She occupies herself at the desk. Enter CARLYLE from R.*)

RUTH. (*To CARLYLE*) You didn't wait for me.

CARLYLE. (*Curtly*) No. Miss Wadleigh asked for you. She wants you to help her with the cups.

RUTH. Bother! I don't want to work. I should think she'd be satisfied with Mr. Upton. He's old woman enough, goodness knows. (*Exit R. in cloak room*)

CARLYLE. (*His manner changes to one of alertness. He glances about to make sure that they are alone. Goes to ANNA*) Did you get it?

ANNA. No. The ticket agent you mentioned wasn't on duty. He hasn't come back yet. I telephoned a moment ago. (*Rises and goes L. with him*) It was the B. & O.—you're sure?

CARLYLE. Of course, I'm sure. The ticket agent's a chap named Jones. Graham introduced him to me once—that's why he was willing to take the bill. It must have been in that office.

ANNA. It wasn't in the drawer or in the safe.

CARLYLE. Ten to one it's here now. I'm gone!

ANNA. Why did you use it?

CARLYLE. Why did I *take* it? Why have I done any one of the dozen foolish things I've done in the past six months? Last night I'd been drinking too much to think clearly. My only desire was to get away before Jordan came. I had to pay the cabman and get tickets to Baltimore and I had to do it quick.

ANNA. (*Gives him money*) Here's the fifty dollars you borrowed from Mr. Graham this morning.

CARLYLE. And your fifty? (*She shows it to him*) You can pay your brother's tuition now, as you expected. I'm almost glad you couldn't get the bill back.

ANNA. But you?

CARLYLE. Oh, well, I've learned a lesson. I'll have to pay for my tuition, too.

(*RUTH enters. Seeing that CARLYLE and ANNA are talking earnestly she remains still.*)

ANNA. Don't say that. We haven't lost yet, and—(*Questioningly*) if we *do* pull through—

CARLYLE. I'll never take anything that doesn't belong to me again. Never! As God is my judge!

(*The light of comprehension shows in RUTH's face. She steps noiselessly into the doorway behind her.*)

ANNA. I believe you! (*She starts to return to her desk. CARLYLE draws her back*)

CARLYLE. Do you know what hurts as bad as anything else?

ANNA. What?

CARLYLE. The recollection of what I said to you last night.

ANNA. (*Brokenly*) Don't—don't speak of it.

CARLYLE. I've been a fool all along. My worst folly has been not appreciating you. If it weren't too late——

ANNA. Is it ever too late to mend?

CARLYLE. I hope not. I didn't mean that. But I—I've given my word to Ruth and you are plighted to Sam Meade.

ANNA. Ah, you mustn't——

CARLYLE. Once I spoke of you as the little gray lady. You're not that, Anna. I'll tell you what you are. The little gold lady. (*He takes her hand and kisses it*) The little gold lady.

RUTH. (*Stepping forth and making herself heard*) I hope I don't intrude.

ANNA. Certainly not.

RUTH. I'm glad, for I intend to stay. Anna, I want to ask you a question.

ANNA. Yes.

RUTH. Just one, and I ask it of you, because I want the *truth*. What did Perry mean just now when he swore to you that he'd never take anything that didn't belong to him again?

CARLYLE. Ruth, that isn't——

RUTH. What did he mean? I insist on knowing. Did he mean that it was he who took the money that disappeared yesterday?

ANNA. You have no right to ask that question.

RUTH. I have all the right in the world. I——

CARLYLE. I'll answer your question, Ruth. I did mean that.

(*There is a dead silence.*)

ANNA. (*Rises*) Perhaps I intrude now. (*There is no reply. She walks to the door; then returns to RUTH R.—does not speak till she reaches RUTH's side*) We all make mistakes, Ruth. We all—(*Chilled at their silence she turns to door R.*) I'll

leave you alone to talk things over. (*Exits in cloak room*)

RUTH. (*Advances a step*) So you're a thief!

CARLYLE. Ruth!

RUTH. A thief! But for papa I'd have been the wife of a thief!

CARLYLE. I intended to return the money. On my honor, I did!

RUTH. Your honor! That's good!

CARLYLE. Ruth! Don't be so hard on me!

RUTH. Hard on *you*! It doesn't occur to you to think of me!

CARLYLE. Of you?

RUTH. Yes, of me! Can't you see that you dragged me into the mire with you? I was your sweetheart. Every tattler in town will link my name with yours.

CARLYLE. Nonsense!

RUTH. It's not nonsense! You know Washington—a big village! How much reputation will I have left when the newspapers get through with me?

CARLYLE. (*Bitterly*) Not one thought of me?

RUTH. You're not in any trouble yet and you mustn't be. Does anyone suspect you?

CARLYLE. I don't know. The bill was marked somehow and I spent it. I'm afraid it can be traced back to me.

RUTH. Thank heaven, it isn't as bad as it might be. We're not married.

CARLYLE. Then you don't love me?

RUTH. Love you? Love a thief? Are you crazy?

CARLYLE. No. I have been.

RUTH. (*Goes to him*) Listen to me——

CARLYLE. You listen to me! I have been crazy! I trusted you! I loved you. I spent my last dollar for you and when more was needed I stole for you!

RUTH. That's right! Accuse me!

CARLYLE. I don't accuse you. I only blame myself. I blame myself for having been so blind that it took a thing like this to open my eyes.

RUTH. The Lord knows my eyes are opened.

CARLYLE. You needn't worry. I'm sane enough now to be glad of my liberty as you will be of yours. I'm sane enough to thank you with all my heart for my freedom. Your name won't be mentioned in this affair. Your skirts are clean and your road is clear. It lies through that door. You're done with me and I'm done with you.

RUTH. That's easily said. I've got to get you out of this or fall with you.

CARLYLE. You can't get me out! (*Plunges his hands in his coat pockets*) God! (*Brings out pieces of bill*) Now I am done for!

RUTH. What are those?

CARLYLE. Pieces of bills I took away. If they find these on me——

RUTH. On you! Why should they be found on you? Why not hide them? Here! (*She takes the bits of paper from him*)

CARLYLE. Your skirts are clean. You'd better go.

RUTH. We must get rid of them, but where—— where? (*Enter MEADE at L. RUTH hastily closes her hands on the bills*) Look out!

MEADE. Mr. Carlyle, you're wanted upstairs.

CARLYLE. Wanted!

RUTH. (*Simultaneously*) Upstairs!

MEADE. Yes; will you come with me, please?

CARLYLE. (*Pulling himself together*) Oh! Of course! I—I'll see you later, Miss Jordan.

(*Exeunt MEADE and CARLYLE. There is a burst of laughter from room R. A street piano outside begins playing. RUTH follows CARLYLE to the door L. She looks after him a moment.*)

RUTH. Will he come back or—do they know? The fool! (*She returns to center. Opens her hand and looks at bills. She is asking herself where to put them. Her eye falls on the papers lying on ANNA'S desk. Their presence reminds her that the desk is open. She starts toward it, then hesitates, and stops. She is arguing with herself*) It's the only way! I must think of myself! (*She looks around quickly. Then she opens the desk, flings in the bills and closes it*) Locked! (*She wipes her face with her palm as though to brush away the vision of what has happened. The other hand clenches the desk. The street piano ceases to play*) Oh, my God!

(*Enter ANNA R. There is heard the sound of clatter and laughter as the door opens.*)

ANNA. (*Going to her*) Ruth! What's the matter? Are you ill?

RUTH. (*Dissembling*) Perry—they sent for him—upstairs.

ANNA. You don't mean he's been arrested?

RUTH. I'm afraid so.

ANNA. Who came for him?

RUTH. Mr. Meade.

ANNA. Then they suspect! Could anyone have overheard Perry talking to you?

RUTH. No.

ANNA. The bill must have turned up. (*She has been musing. Suddenly she becomes alert*) We must do something and do it quickly.

RUTH. What can we do?

ANNA. Just one thing: get him away.

RUTH. There's no time! It can't be done!

ANNA. It *must* be done. It isn't a separation I'm planning. When Perry's safe you can go to him.

RUTH. Go to him! Humph! I never want to see his face again.

ANNA. Ruth! You don't mean that?

RUTH. I mean it with all my heart. I've told him so. What did you expect of me? The man's a thief. He can do what he pleases. I'm through with him.

ANNA. Then I was right. You never loved him!

RUTH. I did once.

ANNA. Ah, no, no! Love—real love isn't like that!

RUTH. (*With intense bitterness*) Meaning, I suppose, that *you* love Perry?

ANNA. Meaning just that.

RUTH. All right. You're welcome to him. I give him back to you. Take him and save him. (*Enter CARLYLE. RUTH exits R.*)

ANNA. Perry! Do they know? Quick; tell me, are you still free?

CARLYLE. Yes, the Lord knows for how long.

ANNA. Who questioned you?

CARLYLE. Meade. He's got a package of bills or something by which to tell the stolen note when he gets it. I may be arrested any minute.

ANNA. No! No! I've a plan.

CARLYLE. It's useless, Anna. You can't help me. You'd better give up trying.

ANNA. I won't give up and you shan't either. We can't keep the truth to ourselves much longer. If you're here when that bill turns up you'll be arrested. You must get out of town and at once.

CARLYLE. They'd telegraph after me.

ANNA. You must get out of the country. When does the next boat sail for Venezuela?

CARLYLE. (*More hopefully*) To-morrow morning.

ANNA. To-morrow? You're sure?

CARLYLE. Graham told me so yesterday.

ANNA. Luck's with us. You have fifty dollars in your pocket. Don't stop to pack your things.

Don't go near your house. There must be a train to New York within an hour. Take it and to-morrow you'll be safe.

CARLYLE. And Graham?

ANNA. At the Pension Office. Get him on your way to the station. Tell him you've decided to accept his offer. Don't let anyone stop you. There's no time to think about it. Go! Go!

CARLYLE. I will. (*Goes to door*)

ANNA. Hurry!

CARLYLE. (*Stops short and turns around*) Wait! What about you?

ANNA. About me? What do you mean?

CARLYLE. They'll find you got me away. What will happen to you?

ANNA. That doesn't matter to me.

CARLYLE. It matters to me. If my trouble is to fall on your shoulders—I won't go.

ANNA. Not to save yourself from prison?

CARLYLE. Not to save myself from Hell!

ANNA. (*Exultantly*) I knew you were that sort. I'll be all right. When you're beyond reach, I'll find some way of explaining things. (*The door at L. opens. MEADE looks in and closes it again. ANNA frozen with horror*) Do you see? You're practically a prisoner now. If you're to get away you must hurry.

CARLYLE. I can't do it. (*Sits*)

ANNA. (*Trying to get him to his feet*) I tell you I'll clear myself. This is your opportunity to get a fresh start. You've got to take it.

CARLYLE. What's the use? My behavior has already cost me everything I care for. While I was fancying myself in love with Ruth I lost you. Now she releases me and you are promised to Meade.

ANNA. No! No! I'm not.

CARLYLE. (*Starting up*) But you said last night——

ANNA. What I said was said to induce Ruth to keep you in that room. Love doesn't shift and turn, Perry, even though we sometimes think it does. You and I were boy and girl playmates. I've always trusted and believed in you. Perry, what you said through the closet door was true—I love you!

CARLYLE. (*Takes her hand*) God bless you! I love you, too, and I can't leave you where there's a chance of trouble for you.

ANNA. All the trouble there is for me, you're making. Can't you understand that by staying you only make me wretched! Your trouble is my trouble now. If you were sent to prison, it would break my heart. If you care anything for me, you'll take this chance to show me that you can be big and fine and square. Will you do that? Will you go?

CARLYLE. Yes. I'll go for your sake and prove myself a man! (*Kisses her hand and makes quick exit at R.*)

(ANNA comes down stage wearily and sinks in chair c. with head on hands.)

MEADE. (*Enter at back. He looks at ANNA, then goes to door R. and glances off to satisfy himself that CARLYLE is there. Comes down-stage fingering a bunch of keys*) You look worn out.

ANNA. I am—very tired. I shan't stay this afternoon.

MEADE. I wouldn't if I was you. (*Turns up stage, keeping his eye on CARLYLE. ANNA, obviously nervous, speaks with the purpose of attracting his attention*)

ANNA. Oh, Mr. Meade.

MEADE. (*Turning down*) Yes?

ANNA. How—how is your case going?

MEADE. (*Sits*) I could put my hand on the man that made that bill.

ANNA. Have you arrested him?

MEADE. No; but I will though, before the lunch hour is over.

ANNA. You're as sure as that?

MEADE. Dead sure. (*Takes roll of bills from his pocket*) Here is the evidence that's going to put one thief in the penitentiary.

ANNA. Those bills?

MEADE. That's it. Through them I'm going to identify that hundred dollar note when it comes in. (*Returns roll to pocket*)

ANNA. Through those! Do you mean to say that if it weren't for those bills you couldn't identify the note? If you lost them, you'd lose your man?

MEADE. I'd have to begin on a new track. It would take me a week or so to get started again.

ANNA. (*Holding out her hand*) Let me see those remarkable bills.

MEADE. (*Shows them to her without letting them go out of his hands*) Just ordinary mutilated money.

ANNA. Let me look at it.

MEADE. (*Withdrawing bills from her grasp and returning same to pocket*) It's just like any other torn money.

ANNA. (*With a movement of vexation*) Then, how will it enable you to identify that hundred dollars?

MEADE. By a mark that corresponds with one on the yellow back.

ANNA. What is the mark?

MEADE. I can't tell you.

ANNA. Not even me?

MEADE. Not even you.

ANNA. Yet you say you're fond of me.

MEADE. Love ain't business. (*Rises—facing front*).

at the Treasury.

(CARLYLE enters door R. and exits door C. ANNA in agony that MEADE will see him, shows her fear.)

ANNA. Love is trust. You don't trust me.

MEADE. Why, yes, I do. Here—(*Takes up piece of paper from desk*) See this?

ANNA. Yes.

MEADE. I tear this piece out of it. Now we might have a thousand other bits of paper, but that would always be the only piece that would fit. No two tears are ever alike.

ANNA. I understand.

MEADE. When the extra hundred comes in—as it's sure to do—I take it to pieces. If the parts fit, the bill is identified. See?

ANNA. Then just that little roll of money is the key that will lock some man in prison?

MEADE. That's it! Pretty good scheme, eh?

ANNA. It seems to me that your chain of evidence is slight.

MEADE. Slight for a jury, maybe. It'll put us next, though, and when I'm sure of my man, I'll find ways enough to make the jury sure.

ANNA. So long as you have these notes, he can't escape you?

MEADE. Not if he's still alive and in America! Escape! Huh! I'll have the maker of that hundred dollar bill inside of twenty-four hours! (*ANNA snatches the bills from his hand and begins tearing them to bits. He seizes her arm. There is almost a struggle*) Here, what are you doing?

ANNA. I can't let you catch that man.

MEADE. But you've done for me. You ruined me. No, by God! You've given the thief into my hands. I suspected him before; I'm sure of him now! The only man you'd do that for is the man you love—and that man is Perriton Carlyle. I said

I'd have him in twenty-four hours; I'll have him in twenty-four minutes, and you gave him to me. (*He starts to go up toward c. door; ANNA clings to his arm violently*)

ANNA. I! Oh, no, no, no. You're wrong. (*With an inspiration*) You're wrong. I tore those bills to save myself! I——

MEADE. Do you think I'm a fool?

ANNA. I tore those bills to save myself, but I can't do it at his expense. Oh, wait! Wait a moment! Let me explain to you. You're going to make an awful mistake! You're going to arrest an innocent man.

MEADE. I'll take my chances on that. Let go of me.

(*In the struggle they have struck violently against the desk. The drawer is so arranged that the blow opens it a little. ANNA sees the pieces of bill inside; MEADE also sees them—both gaze at them—a breathless pause. Then ANNA grabs up the bits of money with an inspiration.*)

ANNA. Wait! Here are your proofs! Look here! Pieces of money in my desk. Now, are you convinced? Now, will you believe that I'm the thief you're after?

MEADE. (*Violently*) No! No!

ANNA. You've got to believe it. Here are the pieces and here I am confessing myself to be a thief! (*The gong rings loudly*) The lunch hour is over! The people are coming back. If you take another step after an innocent man, I'll tell them all what I've told you. I'll tell them that you're making Perry Carlyle a cloak to shield me because you love me! You know they'll believe me! You know your

own chief will believe me! They're coming! You haven't a minute to make up your mind! I say I'm the thief! You've got to believe me! You've got to! You've got to! You've got to! (*Pounding desk with hands hysterically*)

Quick curtain

ACT IV

SCENE: *The same as ACT I. It is October, however, and the trees, instead of being covered with leaves, are nearly bare. The passage of the months that have intervened since first the "back yard" was disclosed is evident in numberless details. The hour is shortly after 9 A. M.*

DISCOVERED: MRS. GRAHAM is discovered lying in the hammock. From across the fence drift the familiar tones of the flute, playing "*I'd Leave My Happy Home For You*". After a moment, MRS. JORDAN enters L.

MRS. JORDAN. (*On porch*) Listening to the music?

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Assuming a sitting posture*) I wonder to which of us he intends to convey that information.

MRS. JORDAN. Information?

MRS. GRAHAM. That he'd leave his happy home.

MRS. JORDAN. Oh! (*Sits on steps and shells peas*) Seems nice not to have to go to work, don't it?

MRS. GRAHAM. Very. I wish a politician died every day.

(*The flute solo ceases.*)

MRS. JORDAN. I reckon everybody here needs the rest. Miss Gray's got a bad headache and Ruth came home about sick last night.

MRS. GRAHAM. It's warm weather for October.

MRS. JORDAN. I don't think the weather's got anything to do with it. I believe there's been trouble

MRS. GRAHAM. Trouble? What kind of trouble?

MRS. JORDAN. I don't know. Only—(MRS. GRAHAM *joins her*) Mr. Carlyle's gone to Venezuela.

MRS. GRAHAM. Yes. To manage Mr. Graham's plantation.

MRS. JORDAN. So Mr. Graham says. But it's mighty sudden.

MRS. GRAHAM. Why, no, it isn't! Mr. Graham's been urging him for months.

MRS. JORDAN. He went without a word to anybody.

MRS. GRAHAM. Did you expect him to say good-bye to you after that scene the night before last at the depot?

MRS. JORDAN. Well, Ruth says she's through with him, and *that's* a blessing!

MRS. GRAHAM. He certainly was good to Ruth.

MRS. JORDAN. Yes. He was liberal enough. Only last Friday he gave her a beautiful picture of a naked lady standing on the moon. (MRS. GRAHAM *laughs*. MRS. JORDAN *calls*) Bob! Oh, Bob! (To MRS. GRAHAM) It was sent to be framed.

MRS. GRAHAM. I think I know the picture.

MRS. JORDAN. Of course, the lady's vulgar, but the moon is lovely! (*Rises and goes to c.* *Calls*) Bob!

(*Enter BOB, his' head appearing atop the fence*)

BOB. Yes'm.

MRS. JORDAN. Bob, will you go down to Veerhof's and get a picture that's there for Miss Jordan.

BOB. Yes'm.

MRS. JORDAN. That's a good boy.

BOB. Yes'm. (*Exit*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Returning to the hammock*) Why should Ruth be *through* with Mr. Carlyle?

MRS. JORDAN. (*Returning to the peas*) It's my opinion that the man had her hypnotized. When he went away she came to her senses again. Say, Miss Carruth.

MRS. GRAHAM. Yes.

MRS. JORDAN. When you get to Venezuela, why don't you marry Mr. Carlyle?

MRS. GRAHAM. Why don't I marry Mr. Carlyle? Because—(*Laughs*) Haven't you given up that idea yet?

MRS. JORDAN. No, indeed. I think he'd be an elegant match for you. Then Ruth and Mr. Graham—

MRS. GRAHAM. Ruth and Mr. Graham! Dick—get married—to Ruth?

MRS. JORDAN. I didn't believe there was anything really serious between you and Mr. Graham—and so—and so—

MRS. GRAHAM. And so?

MRS. JORDAN. Well, I thought you might use your influence with Mr. Graham.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*With emphasis*) Use my influence to make Mr. Graham marry Ruth? That's too funny! (*Laughs sarcastically*)

MRS. JORDAN. (*Gathering the peas in her pan*) You needn't laugh. Mr. Graham's been paying her a great deal of attention recently.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Stops laughing and rises angrily*) What?

MRS. JORDAN. (*Walks up steps*) Yes. You ought to a-seen them together last night. (*Enter GRAHAM at L., jauntily*) Here he is now.

GRAHAM. Hello! You all look happy.

MRS. GRAHAM. We are. Mrs. Jordan's been telling me how fond you are of Ruth.

MRS. JORDAN. I didn't say "fond". Still you are fond of the child, aren't you, Mr. Graham?

(*He nods violently*) I knew it! (*Exit MRS. JORDAN in house*)

GRAHAM. Damn Ruth! (*Putting his arm around MRS. GRAHAM*) You're not going to let that dragon's gossip make you angry again?

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Gradually giving way and presenting her lips to be kissed*) No-o-o!

(*He is about to kiss her. Enter BOB, his head visible as before.*)

BOB. Mrs. Jordan here?

GRAHAM. (*Hastily leaving MRS. GRAHAM*) No. What do you want?

BOB. Nothin'! (*Exit BOB*)

MR. GRAHAM. You'll admit it's annoying to be asked if you'll influence your husband to marry another woman.

GRAHAM. Did she ask you that? (*MRS. GRAHAM nods*) The Mormon!

MRS. GRAHAM. You haven't heard from that lawyer?

GRAHAM. Mr. Carr? I'm expecting good news every minute. Guess what I did yesterday.

MRS. GRAHAM. I can't.

GRAHAM. Stole the marriage certificate out of your drawer and took it to be framed. We'll hang it in our stateroom on the boat.

MRS. GRAHAM. Oh, Dick! You dear! (*Embraces him*)

(*Enter MEADE and JORDAN from the house. MEADE signals their presence by coughing.*)

GRAHAM. (*Looking over MRS. GRAHAM's shoulder*) Never mind, Mr. Meade. We're going to have *this* one if it provokes a riot.

MEADE. I didn't go to butt in. Miss Gray sent word to wait here.

JORDAN. Miss Carruth doesn't mind me.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Clinging to GRAHAM*) No, I'm getting to a point where I don't mind anybody.

JORDAN. I wish I could corner love. I *could* make something out of that.

GRAHAM. I think you have.

JORDAN. (*To MEADE*) Sam, you remember my bill for survivors of the Custer Massacre?

MEADE. (*Moodily*) You were talking about it the other day.

JORDAN. (*Dejectedly. Throwing wide his arm*) Busted!

MEADE. That so?

JORDAN. Yes. There weren't no survivors.

GRAHAM. I never knew before how cruel those Indians were.

JORDAN. So there's a great big home planned with nobody to fill it. I wonder if any Mexican war veterans are alive.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Laughing*) I'm afraid not. Why don't you get the encyclopedia and find out.

JORDAN. Thanks. I will. (*Goes to steps*) There ought to be some money in Mexican war veterans. (*Enter ANNA from house. JORDAN bows and exits*)

MRS. GRAHAM. (*To ANNA*) Hello. How's your headache?

ANNA. (*Wearily*) Better.

MRS. GRAHAM. You look pretty bad.

MEADE. (*To ANNA*) Good-morning. (*To the others*) I want to talk to Miss Gray.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Starting up steps*) Oh, I beg your pardon.

GRAHAM. And I.

ANNA. (*To GRAHAM*) Do you mind waiting a moment, Mr. Graham? You'll excuse him, won't you, Miss Carruth?

MRS. GRAHAM. Certainly. (*To GRAHAM*) I'll wait for you on the front steps. (*Exits*)

GRAHAM. (*To ANNA*) Now I'm at your service.

MEADE. (*To ANNA—remonstratingly*) But—but I've got something to say that concerns you.

ANNA. What I have to say concerns both of you.
(*To GRAHAM*) A hundred dollar bill was taken from the Treasury. (*To MEADE*) Mr. Carlyle sailed from New York this morning for Venezuela.
(*To both*) Mr. Carlyle took the bill.

(*MEADE turns up-stage moodily.*)

GRAHAM. I knew he'd gone—I guessed the reason why.

ANNA. (*To GRAHAM*) He wanted you to know what he had done before he began working for you.

GRAHAM. I don't care what he's done; I believe in what he is going to do.

ANNA. And so?

GRAHAM. I shall cable him to report for duty. Is that all?

ANNA. (*Much moved*) That is all—except—thank you.

GRAHAM. Then I yield the floor to Mr. Meade.
(*Exit in house*)

ANNA. Well?

MEADE. Well, I was sent here to arrest you.

ANNA. But you know I didn't make that bill.

MEADE. You say now you didn't; you said last night that you did.

ANNA. Oh, but I said that to give Perry time enough to get away.

MEADE. All right. Maybe you would like to tell that to the chief, and be sent up for aiding and abetting a felony.

ANNA. Why, I never thought of that.

MEADE. The chief will.

ANNA. But now you can tell him I didn't do it.

MEADE. Well, if that ain't like a woman. What I know cuts no ice with the chief. I can't say,

"This girl's not guilty. I love her and that proves it."

ANNA. But you couldn't arrest me.

MEADE. I wouldn't! Unluckily I'm not the only man in the secret service.

ANNA. No, but you were the beginning of this. Why couldn't you have dropped the case? Why did you have to track down the man I love?

MEADE. My duty. It ain't fair to blame me.

ANNA. No, it isn't. I'm sorry for what I did yesterday, too. I might have got you into great trouble. I had to save Perry and there was no other way. You'd have done just what I did in the same place.

MEADE. I only wish you loved me that much.

ANNA. Now, what's to be done? What's to be done?

MEADE. I don't know. You ought to've looked before you leaped.

ANNA. I'd do the same thing again, even now. Only I was thinking about my—brother——

MEADE. The little chap, huh?

ANNA. Yes.

MEADE. You've got to bring Carlyle back.

ANNA. No.

MEADE. It's no good saying no. This is serious. You're likely to go up for six or seven years.

ANNA. Better I should suffer than he.

MEADE. Well, I'll be damned. Excuse me, but I will.

ANNA. See here. There's nothing to prove that a bill was ever made. Couldn't you say that none was made?

MEADE. Yes—unless the bill turns up.

ANNA. I'd forgotten that.

MEADE. You'll have to get the bill.

ANNA. I can't; I tried yesterday.

MEADE. Do you know who took it?

ANNA. A ticket agent named Jones at the B. & O.

MEADE. (*Running to steps*) Well, that's easy!

ANNA. Wait; I made his assistant turn the office upside down looking for it. The note's gone.

MEADE. Of course; gone to the B. & O. offices in Baltimore, and I'm going after it.

ANNA. (*Hopeful again*) Do you suppose you can get it?

MEADE. I suppose I can try. (*Exit through passage up L.*)

(*Enter RUTH from house.*)

RUTH. (*Coming down steps*) Mr. Meade seems excited.

ANNA. (*Coldly; walks away*) Yes.

RUTH. Yesterday was enough to excite anyone. Don't you think so?

(*ANNA crosses with apparent intention of going in the house.*)

ANNA. Yes. (*Changes mind and halts*) Ruth, do you—do you remember speaking to me yesterday about my desk being unlocked?

RUTH. No—yes—I don't know.

ANNA. Well, I know. I want to thank you for what you did.

RUTH. What I did? You mean——

ANNA. I mean just what you're thinking about now.

RUTH. Then what are you thanking me for?

ANNA. For helping Perry to escape from arrest—and from you.

RUTH. You are angry because of what I did?

ANNA. No, because of what you made Perry Carlyle do.

RUTH. I made him do? He must have been a very weak man if I made him steal.

ANNA. Every man in love is weak. Perry was always easily lead. You knew that—yet you were a constant temptation to him.

RUTH. Well, he'll never be tempted by me any more. I'll never see his face again.

ANNA. Thank you.

RUTH. You're welcome. (*Moderates her tone*) No; I can't be angry with you. It's real nice of you to keep quiet about those pieces in your desk, and I'm awfully glad they didn't get you into trouble. Shall we be friends?

ANNA. (*On steps*) If you like.

RUTH. I do like. (*Runs to her and kisses her*) There! Now we are friends again!

ANNA. It's very easy, isn't it? (*Enter GRAHAM through gate*) Why, Mr. Graham, I thought you went in the house?

GRAHAM. I did, went out the front door, made a circuit of the block and behold me. I'm too expectant to sit still.

ANNA. (*Somewhat grimly*) Yes; so am I. (*Exit ANNA*)

RUTH. (*Coquettishly*) What do you expect, Mr. Graham?

GRAHAM. Oh, my laundry—among other things.

RUTH. Is *that* all?

GRAHAM. Isn't that enough?

RUTH. (*Seating herself in hammock and drawing circles with the point of her parasol*) I thought you might be expecting—matrimony.

GRAHAM. I? (*Puts cigar in his mouth*) Nonsense! (*Searches his pockets*) You don't happen to have a match, do you? (*Finds one*) Never mind; I have one.

RUTH. Of the sort that are made in Heaven?

GRAHAM. (*Drawing his head back as the odor of sulphur assails him*) Not Heaven—judging by the smell.

RUTH. One is likely to make mistakes in marriage.

GRAHAM. There is one man who makes no mistake.

RUTH. Who is he?

GRAHAM. The man who doesn't marry. (*Lights cigar*)

RUTH. Do be serious! I came near making a dreadful mistake.

GRAHAM. You don't say so!

RUTH. I should have married and then have found out that my heart wasn't in my husband.

GRAHAM. Curious anatomical mix-up if it were, don't you think?

RUTH. I see you won't be serious. (*Leaving the hammock*) Will you be generous?

GRAHAM. How?

RUTH. I have tickets for the theater. Will you take me?

GRAHAM. I thought you went with Carlyle.

(*Enter MRS. GRAHAM from house. She stands in doorway, unseen by RUTH.*)

RUTH. I want to go again. Will you take me?

GRAHAM. I'm sorry; it's impossible.

RUTH. I can't see why.

GRAHAM. (*Pointing*) You can if you turn around.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Crossing*) Mr. Graham has an engagement with me.

RUTH. Oh, very well! (*Enter BOB at R. He is carrying two packages. She addresses him*) Ah, Bob, what have you?

BOB. Pictures from Veerhof's. (*Gives her one picture*) Your mother sent me for it.

RUTH. And the other?

BOB. Man asked me to bring it to Mr. Graham. (*Gives it to MR. GRAHAM*)

GRAHAM. (*Gives it to MRS. GRAHAM. Addressing her*) Here! I told you about this. (*To BOB*) Much obliged, Bob. Here's a quarter.

(*BOB puts coin in his hat. Enter MRS. JORDAN from house with a letter.*)

RUTH. (*To MRS. JORDAN*) For me?
MRS. JORDAN. No. Special delivery for Mr. Graham.

(*GRAHAM advances to L. to take letter, leaving RUTH and MRS. GRAHAM opening packages at R.*)

GRAHAM. Much obliged. I've been waiting for this.

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Holding out picture*) Dick! Is this nude woman yours?

MRS. JORDAN. It's Ruth's!

RUTH. (*Much agitated*) And this! (*Holding out frame*) Certificate of marriage—Richard Graham and Edith Carruth! (*They exchange frames*)

GRAHAM. Bob, the bungler!

BOB. (*Indignantly*) I ain't a bunghole!

RUTH. I regret having stumbled across your secret, Mr Graham, but naturally——

GRAHAM. There's no reason for it's being a secret any longer. Edith, old girl, we've got the money.

RUTH. Come, mother.

MRS. JORDAN. Married! I think it's disgraceful (*Exit in house*)

RUTH. Well, I'd hate to tell you what I think. (*Exit in house*)

BOB. I ain't no bunghole.

GRAHAM. I didn't say you were a bunghole—I

said you were a bird. Take this and blow yourself
(*Gives him paper bill*)

BOB. Five dollars! (*Throwing arms up in astonishment, loses balance and falls backward over fence*)

(*GRAHAM and MRS. GRAHAM look at each other a moment and then embrace.*)

MRS. GRAHAM. I'm so happy.

GRAHAM. And I!

MRS. GRAHAM. When do we start?

GRAHAM. A week from to-day.

MRS. GRAHAM. It will be like another honeymoon. (*Enter ANNA from house. To ANNA.*) The cat's out of the bag at last.

ANNA. I know. I've heard the lamentations of Jeremiah Jordan.

GRAHAM. (*Crossing to L. ANNA at c.*) I've cabled Carlyle and we'll be with him a week after he reaches Puerto Cabello.

ANNA. I'm glad for him and I'm glad for both of you.

MRS. GRAHAM. I was just saying that it will be like another honeymoon. Don't you wish it were *your* honeymoon, Miss Gray?

ANNA. (*Turning from them in deep emotion*) My honeymoon!

MRS. GRAHAM. (*Solicitously*) Oh, I hope I haven't hurt you.

ANNA. (*Suppressing her tears*) No—no. I was laughing. Laughing at the thought of an old maid's honeymoon.

(*Enter JORDAN from house.*)

JORDAN. A gentleman in the parlor to see you Mr. Graham.

GRAHAM. All right. (*Goes up steps*) Come

along, Mrs. Graham. (*She pays no attention*)
Edith!

MRS. GRAHAM. Oh, I didn't know my own name!

(*Exit MR. and MRS. GRAHAM hand in hand, in house. ANNA looks after them an instant, then sinks down on the steps and buries her face in her hands. The gate at L. is opened slightly and then wide. Enter CARLYLE, carrying a traveling bag.*)

CARLYLE. Anna!

ANNA. My God! Perry, you didn't go?

CARLYLE. (*Puts down bag*) I couldn't. All the way to New York the click of the car wheels kept saying: "Coward! Coward!" I couldn't do it. I had to come back.

ANNA. But your fresh start?

CARLYLE. No use, Anna. That went yesterday. I told you I was going to make a man of myself. I see now that the place to begin is right here.

ANNA. What are you going to do?

CARLYLE. Give myself up.

ANNA. Why? To break my heart?

CARLYLE. Don't you suppose that as soon as I got a chance to think I realized that my going away was going to make it mighty hot for you.

ANNA. But it hasn't, Perry. You see it hasn't.

CARLYLE. I'll go on one condition and that is that you go with me.

ANNA. To Venezuela?

CARLYLE. Why not? Anna, I love you. I've always loved you. I've been blinded, fascinated, a fool, but I see now in my heart I've always loved you. You believe me? Don't you believe me, Anna?

ANNA. Yes, I do.

CARLYLE. Then forgive me my desertion as you

forgave me my dishonesty. You tell me to begin over again. Help me to do it. Without you I am nothing. If you really have faith in me, prove it by becoming my wife.

ANNA. I will. I can't go now but I'll follow you to New York on the next train.

CARLYLE. You will do that? You promise?

ANNA. Yes! Yes! Wait for me at the steamer, or rather, don't wait. Don't take any risks. If anything detains me I'll sail on the next boat.

CARLYLE. Then—good-bye, until to-night.
(CARLYLE *exits at gate*)

(*Enter MEADE.*)

MEADE. It's gone. You'd better clear out.

ANNA. I will. (*Starts for house*)

MEADE. You can't go that way. There's a——

(*Enter CARLYLE again.*)

CARLYLE. There's a policeman in front of the house. What's he doing there?

MEADE. The department sent him to help me arrest Miss Gray.

(ANNA *dazed.*)

CARLYLE. Arrest Anna?

MEADE. For putting together that bill.

CARLYLE. (*Advances to him*) I'm the man who made that bill.

MEADE. (*With the instinct of the thief catcher; seizes him*) Then you're the man I want.

ANNA. Perry, what have you done?

(*At the sound of her voice, MEADE realizes that he is breaking her heart. He looks at her, then releases his hold of CARLYLE and walks up-stage.*)

CARLYLE. (*Going to ANNA*) It was the only thing I could do. There was no other way.

ANNA. (*To MEADE*) Surely you can let him go. Can't you send the policeman away?

MEADE. Yes; then I'd go to jail when the note turned up. If I could get that bill.

ANNA. Wasn't it sent to Baltimore?

MEADE. Yes, I telephoned. The B. & O. office in Baltimore refused it.

CARLYLE. Then it has been returned.

MEADE. Of course; to the Treasury.

CARLYLE. Well, I guess it's all up! (*Goes to ANNA*) Good-bye. I won't see you again before—before—you mustn't get mixed up in this.

ANNA. (*Seizing both his shoulders*) You musn't go, Perry! You can't! You're mine again now! There must be some other way!

CARLYLE. I guess it wasn't to be, dear. I'm not good enough for you. You'll be better off without me.

ANNA. I love you.

CARLYLE. It—it seems foolish to thank you for—for everything—for the love that was too fine for me to understand. But I do thank you. Good-bye. (*Walks to his bag and picks it up. ANNA is sobbing*) Now, Mr. Meade.

(*Enter MR. and MRS. GRAHAM from house.*)

GRAHAM. (*Surprised*) Hello! Carlyle! I thought you were on your way to Venezuela.

CARLYLE. (*With an effort to smile*) No; I'm on my way to jail. You'll have to get a new manager.

MRS. GRAHAM. To jail!

GRAHAM. To jail! (*Addreses MEADE*) Because of that bill? Why, surely we can fix that!

MEADE. If we had the bill.

GRAHAM. Had it?

MEADE. Yes; no bill; no evidence.

GRAHAM. I've got the bill. (*Produces it*)

ANNA. (*Eagerly, going to him*) That bill! Oh, it can't be true!

GRAHAM. (*Hands her the note*) See for yourself. The man who came to see me just now was Jones, the ticket agent who changed the note. The B. & O. threw it back on him and he held me responsible because I'd introduced Carlyle. I took it up. Carlyle, you owe me \$100.00.

CARLYLE (*Shaking his hand. ANNA gives the bill to MEADE*) I owe you more than that.

(*GRAHAM crosses to MRS. GRAHAM.*)

ANNA. (*To MEADE*) Now, what are you going to do?

(*MEADE silently tears the bill in bits; ANNA walks into CARLYLE'S arms. GRAHAM embraces MRS.*

GRAHAM. The flute is heard playing: "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms".)

Curtain

(*First curtain: As before. MEADE walking silently up into the alley.*)

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Pollock

Little gray lady...

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